



ST. THOMAS
AQUINAS

ACADEMY

A SETON  CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Wellness Plan

2022-2023

341 E NORWICH ST.
MILWAUKEE, WI 53207



SETON

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Table of Contents

- I. Preamble
- II. School Wellness Committee
- III. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability,
and Community Engagement
- IV. Nutrition
- V. Physical Activity
- VI. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness
- VII. Glossary

I. Preamble

St Thomas Aquinas Academy is committed to the optimal development of every student. We believe that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, we need to create positive, safe and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism and better performance on cognitive tasks.^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students.^{8,9,10} In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education and extracurricular activities - do better academically.^{11,12,13,14} Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance. ^{15,16,17}

This policy outlines St Thomas Aquinas Academy's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students in the School have access to healthy foods throughout the school day - both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus- in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;(refer to a class or phy ed class where they address quality nutrition)
- Students have opportunities to be physically active before, during and after school;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of the School in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits;
- The School establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives. This policy applies to all students and staff. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

II. School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

STAA convened a wellness committee that meets at least 2 times per year to establish goals for

and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of this school-level wellness policy (heretofore referred as "wellness policy"). The committee members will represent all school levels and include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program (e.g., school nutrition director); physical education teachers; health education teachers; school health professionals (e.g., health education teachers, mental health and social services staff [e.g., school counselors) school administrators (e.g., principal, dean of students), school board members; and the general public. To the extent possible, the policy will include representatives and reflect the diversity of the community.

Leadership

The Principal or designee(s) will convene the wellness committee and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and will ensure the school's compliance with the policy.

Name	Title/Relationship to the School	Email address	Role on Committee
Ms. Andrea Bergmann	Principal	bergmanna@staamke.org	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Mrs. Irene Tovar	Food Service Manager	tovari@staamke.org	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Mrs. Maria Sanchez	Lunch assistant/cook	sanchezm@staamke.org	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Kelly Lothian	Food Program Director	klothian@setoncatholicschools.org	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Stephanie Traska	Dean of Operations	traskas@staamke.org	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation

III. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

STAA will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions and timelines specific to each school; and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where and when; as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. This wellness policy can be found in the St Thomas Aquinas academy family handbook.

Recordkeeping

STAA will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy at

the office at 341 E Norwich Street. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public;
- Documentation of efforts to review and update the Local Schools Wellness Policy; including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods the school uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the wellness committee;
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements;
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the local school wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the Local School Wellness Policy has been made available to the public

Annual Notification of Policy

STAA will actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates to the policy and implementation status. STAA will make this information available via the school's website. The School will provide as much information as possible about the school nutrition environment. This will include a summary of the School's events or activities related to wellness policy implementation. Annually, the School will also publicize the name and contact information of the School's official leading and coordinating the committee, as well as information on how the public can get involved with the school wellness committee.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, the St Thomas Aquinas Academy will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications

STAA is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. STAA will actively communicate ways in which representatives of the committee and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means. STAA will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the school's website, as well as non- electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. STAA will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the school is communicating important school information with parents. STAA will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. STAA will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

IV. Nutrition

School Meals

STAA is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams *trans* fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

St Thomas Aquinas Academy participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and we are committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students;
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (Catholic East Elementary offers reimbursable school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards.)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using at least ten of the following Smarter Lunchroom techniques:
 - Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chafing dishes or hotel pans).
 - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily.
 - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students.
 - All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names.
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
 - White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers.
 - A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to students (e.g., salad bars, snack rooms, etc.).
 - Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor and promotional ideas.
 - Student artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals. These school nutrition personnel will refer to USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day* and throughout every school campus* ("school campus" and "school day" are defined in the glossary). Catholic East Elementary will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.

Water cups will be available in the cafeteria if a drinking fountain is not present. Students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

STAA is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus* during the school day* support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (e.g., "competitive" foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits.

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards including through:

- Celebrations and parties. The School will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas. Healthy party ideas are available from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and from the USDA.
- Classroom snacks brought by parents. The District will provide parents a list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards.
- Rewards and incentives. The School will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a list of alternative ways to reward children. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff, teachers, parents, students and the community.

STAA will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through at least:

Nutrition Education

STAA will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students. STAA will

provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Is part of not only health education classes, but also integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences and elective subjects; Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits and school gardens;
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- Links with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, other school foods and nutrition-related community services;
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

STAA will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 of the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- Relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Reading and using the FDA nutrition fact labels
- Food guidance from MyPlate
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- Eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grain products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain *trans* fat
- Choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars
- Eating more calcium-rich foods
- Preparing healthy meals and snacks
- Risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- Accepting body size differences
- Food safety
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Making healthy choices when eating at restaurants
- Eating disorders
- Reducing sodium intake
- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to nutrition and dietary behavior
- How to develop a plan and track progress toward achieving a personal goal to eat healthfully
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior
- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

STAA is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. STAA strives to teach students how to make informed choices about nutrition, health and physical activity. These efforts will be weakened if students are subjected to advertising on School's property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information the School is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of the School to protect and promote student's health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with the School's wellness policy.

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus* during the school day* will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards

Food and beverage marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage marketing often includes an oral, written, or graphic statements made for the purpose of promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product.¹⁵ This term includes, but is not limited to the following:

As the school nutrition services and Athletics program reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by the District wellness policy.

IV. Physical Activity

Children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive school physical activity program (CSPAP). A CSPAP reflects strong coordination and synergy across all of the components: quality physical education as the foundation; physical activity before, during and after school; staff involvement and family and community engagement; and the school is committed to providing these opportunities. STAA will ensure that these varied physical activity opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education. STAA participates in *afterschool physical activities*.

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks or physical education) will not be withheld as punishment for any reason. The school will provide teachers and other school staff with a list of ideas for alternative ways to discipline students.

To the extent practicable, the STAA will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active.

Physical Education

STAA will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential

physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts. The curriculum will support the essential components of physical education.

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. STAA will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

All students in each grade will receive physical education for at least 60-89 minutes per week throughout the school year.

The school's physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments and will use criterion-based reporting for each student.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

Health education will be required in all grades (elementary) and will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 the following essential topics on physical activity:

- The physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Health-related fitness, that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- Differences between physical activity, exercise and fitness
- Overcoming barriers to physical activity
- Phases of an exercise session, that is, warm up, workout and cool down
- Decreasing sedentary activities, such as TV watching
- Opportunities for physical activity in the community
- Preventing injury during physical activity
- Weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia and sunburn while being physically active
- How much physical activity is enough, that is, determining frequency, intensity, time and type of physical activity
- Developing an individualized physical activity and fitness plan
- Monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan
- Dangers of using performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids
- Social influences on physical activity, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness
- How to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity.

Recess (Elementary)

STAA offers at least 20 minutes of recess on all days during the school year. If recess is offered

before lunch, schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing time, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves, will be built into the recess transition period/time frame before students enter the cafeteria.

Outdoor recess will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play. In the event that the school or district must conduct indoor recess, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active, and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Classroom Physical Activity Breaks (Elementary and Secondary)

STAA recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered periodic opportunities to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. The School recommends teachers provide short (3-5-minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom time at least three days per week. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into "core" subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

STAA will support classroom teachers incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects by providing annual professional development opportunities and resources, including information on leading activities, activity options, as well as making available background material on the connections between learning and movement.

Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Before and After School Activities

STAA offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity either before and/or after the school day (or both) through a variety of methods. STAA will encourage students to be physically active before and after school by physical activity in aftercare and sports.

Active Transport

STAA will support active transport to and from school, such as walking or biking. CEE will encourage this behavior by engaging in *six or more* of the activities below; including but not limited to:

- Designate safe or preferred routes to school
- Promote activities such as participation in International Walk to School Week, National Walk and Bike to School Week
- Secure storage facilities for bicycles and helmets (e.g., shed, cage, fenced area)
- Instruction on walking/bicycling safety provided to students
- Promote safe routes program to students, staff, and parents via newsletters, websites, local newspaper
- Use walking school buses

VI. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

STAA will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues and physical activity facilities. SCS will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development and strong educational outcomes.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy guidelines. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

Community Partnerships

STAA will continue relationships with community partners in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

STAA will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

STAA will use electronic mechanisms as well as non-electronic mechanisms to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

VII. Glossary:

- 1 **Bradley, B, Green, AC.** Do Health and Education Agencies in the United States Share Responsibility for **Academic Achievement and Health?** A Review of **25 years of Evidence** About the Relationship of Adolescents' **Academic Achievement and Health Behaviors**, *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2013; 52(5):523–532.
- 2 **Meyers AF, Sampson AE, Weitzman M, Rogers BL, Kayne H.** School **breakfast** program and **school performance**. *American Journal of Diseases of Children*. 1989;143(10):1234-1239.
- 3 **Murphy JM.** **Breakfast** and learning: an updated review. *Current Nutrition & Food Science*. 2007; 3:3-36.
- 4 **Murphy JM, Pagano ME, Nachmani J, Sperling P, Kane S, Kleinman RE.** The relationship of school breakfast to psychosocial and **academic functioning: Cross-sectional and longitudinal observations in an inner-city school sample**. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*. 1998;152(9):899–907.
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- 6 **Rampersaud GC, Pereira MA, Girard BL, Adams J, Metz J.** Breakfast habits, nutritional **status, body weight, and academic performance in children and adolescents**. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. 2005;105(5):743-760, quiz 761-762.
- 7 **Taras, H.** Nutrition and student performance **at school**. *Journal of School Health*. 2005;75(6):199–213.
- 8 **MacLellan D, Taylor J, Wood K.** Food intake and **academic performance among adolescents**. *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*. 2008;69(3):141-144.
- 9 **Neumark-Sztainer D, Story M, Dixon LB, Resnick MD, Blum RW.** Correlates of **inadequate consumption of dairy products among adolescents**. *Journal of Nutrition Education*. 1997;29(1):12-20.
- 10 **Neumark-Sztainer D, Story M, Resnick MD, Blum RW.** **Correlates of inadequate fruit and vegetable consumption among adolescents**. *Preventive Medicine*. 1996;25(5):497–505.
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- 13 **Haapala E, Poikkeus A-M, Kukkonen-Harjula K, Tompuri T, Lintu N, Väistö J, Leppänen P, Laaksonen D, Lindi V, Lakka T.** *Association of physical activity and sedentary behavior with academic skills – A follow-up study among primary school children*. *PLOS ONE*, 2014; 9(9): e107031.
- 14 **Hillman C, Pontifex M, Castelli D, Khan N, Raine L, Scudder M, Drollette E, Moore R, Wu C-T, Kamijo K.** *Effects of the FITKids randomized control trial on executive control and brain function*. *Pediatrics* 2014; 134(4): e1063-1071. **15 Change Lab Solutions.** (2014). *District Policy Restricting the Advertising of Food and Beverages Not Permitted to be Sold on School Grounds*. Retrieved from <http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/district-policy-school-food-ads>