



## Wellness Policy

### Introduction

Harding Independence Charter District (hereto referred to as the LEA) is committed to the optimal development of every student. The LEA believes 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.

This policy outlines the LEA’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 LEA 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;
- 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 LEA in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- The LEA 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, staff, and schools in the LEA.

### **I. School Wellness Committee**

#### ***Committee Role and Membership***

The LEA will convene a representative LEA wellness committee that meets at least once 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 LEA-level wellness policy (heretofore referred as “wellness policy”).

The Committee membership will represent, but not be limited to: parents; representatives of the school nutrition program (ex., school nutrition director); teachers; school administrators, school board members; health professionals; and the general public.

#### ***Leadership***

The Executive Director or designee(s) will convene the Committee and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and will ensure each school’s compliance with the policy.



II. **Wellness Policy Assessment Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, Community Engagement, and Public Release**

***Annual Progress Reports and Assessment Implementation***

The LEA will compile and publish an assessment report to share basic information about the wellness policy and report on the progress of the schools within the LEA in meeting wellness goals. This report will be published around the same time each year, and will include information from each school within the LEA. This report may include, but is not limited to:

- The website address for the wellness policy and/or how the public can receive/access a copy of the wellness policy;
- A description of the LEA's progress in meeting the wellness policy goals;
- A summary of the LEA's events or activities related to wellness policy assessment implementation;
- The name and position title of the designated LEA policy leader(s) identified in Section I; and
- Information on how individuals and the public can get involved with the Committee.

The LEA will actively notify households/families of the availability of the annual report. The Committee, will establish and monitor goals and objectives for the LEA.

***Policy Review, Update and Responsible Parties***

The Committee will work with stakeholders and the school administration to update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual progress reports and assessments, and/or as LEA priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. **The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as needed.**

***Community and Stakeholder Awareness, Outreach, and Communications***

The LEA is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. The LEA will actively communicate ways in which representatives of Committee and other Stakeholders can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for that LEA. The LEA 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. The LEA will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the LEA'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. The LEA will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the LEA and individual schools are communicating other important school information with parents.



**Public Release**

The LEA will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum.

**III. Nutrition**

***School Meals***

Our school LEA is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and zero grams *trans* fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer’s specification); and to meet 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.

The LEA participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP). The LEA is 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. (The LEA offers reimbursable school meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](#).)

***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). The LEA will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. In addition, students may be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

***Competitive Foods and Beverages***

The LEA is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus during the school day support healthy eating. Competitive Foods and Beverages will not be allowed unless approved as an exempted fundraiser.

***Fundraising***

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the school campus during the school day. The LEA will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas [examples from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) and the [USDA](#)].



### ***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 and teachers, parents, students, and the community.

The LEA will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs.

### ***Nutrition Education***

The LEA aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools 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;
- Include enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, and participatory activities;
- Promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise); and
- Include nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.

## **IV. Physical Activity**

Children and adolescents should participate in 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive, school-based physical activity program that includes these components: physical education, recess, classroom-based physical activity, and out-of-school time activities and the LEA is committed to providing these opportunities. Schools will ensure that these varied opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education.

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, physical activity breaks, or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason. The LEA will provide teachers and other school staff with a [list of ideas](#) for alternative ways to discipline students. To the extent practicable, the LEA will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. The LEA will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.



### ***Physical Education***

The LEA 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.

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

### ***Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education***

The LEA will include in the health education curriculum the following essential topics on 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
- Decreasing sedentary activities, such as TV watching
- Opportunities for physical activity in the community

### ***Physical Activity Breaks***

The LEA 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 may be offered **periodic opportunities** to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. The LEA recommends teachers provide short (3-5 minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom time. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

### ***Before and After School Activities***

The LEA offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity either before and/or after the school day (or both) through a variety of methods.

## **V. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness**

The LEA will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues, and physical activity facilities. The LEA 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.

### ***Community Partnerships***

The LEA will develop relationships with community partners (i.e. hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, etc.) 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 Engagement***

The LEA 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.

As described in the “Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications” subsection, the LEA will use electronic mechanisms (such as email or displaying notices on the LEA’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 opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

***Staff Wellness and Health Promotion***

The Committee will have also focus on staff wellness issues, identifies and disseminates wellness resources, and performs other functions that support staff wellness in coordination with human resources staff.

Schools in the LEA will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. The LEA promotes staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management that are accessible and free or low-cost.

*Evaluated and Revised: November 2023*

*Reference: Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296); Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 USC 1758b), Local School Wellness Policy Implementation; Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-265).*