

School District: HOPE Christian Schools
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HOPE Christian Schools
Wellness Policy
2024-2025 through 2026-2027



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Policy Preamble

HOPE Christian Schools (hereto referred to as the District) is committed to the optimal development of every student. Good nutrition and regular physical activity before, during, and after the school day are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. The District believes that we need to create and support health-promoting learning environments throughout our schools, giving students the opportunity to achieve success. This policy outlines the District's approach to ensure all students practice healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school day.

Policy Leadership

The designated official for oversight of the wellness policy is James Degnan, Regional Operations Manager. The official shall convene the Wellness Committee and lead the review, updating, and evaluation of the policy.

A Wellness Committee shall be formed and maintained to oversee the activities set forth in this policy. The Committee shall meet annually to review nutrition and physical activity policies and to develop an action plan for the coming year. The Committee shall meet no less than one time during the school year to discuss the implementation of the established activities and address any barriers and challenges. The Committee shall report annually to the HOPE Christian Schools Board on the implementation of the policy and any recommended changes or revisions. The Board will adopt, or revise policies based on the Committee recommendations.

The District shall invite a diverse group of stakeholders to participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy. Stakeholders may include:

- Administrator
- Athletic Director
- School Operations Manager (SOM)
- School Admissions Manager (SAM)
- Dean of Students (DOS)
- Dean of Instruction (DOI)
- Classroom teacher
- Physical education teacher
- School food service representative
- Community member/parent
- Student
- MCFI

Nutrition Standards for All Foods

The District is committed to serving healthy meals to our students. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, model healthy eating patterns, and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs. All schools in the District participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and CACFP.

Standards and Guidelines for School Meals

The District is committed to ensuring that:

- All meals meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established under the Healthy Hunger-free Kids Act of 2010 (www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/nutrition-standards-school-meals).
- All meals are accessible to all students.
- Withholding food as a punishment shall be strictly prohibited.
- All meals are appealing and attractive and served in clean and pleasant settings.
- Drinking water is available for students during mealtimes.
- Students are provided with at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 15 to eat lunch after being seated.
- All school campuses are “closed” meaning that students are not permitted to leave the school grounds during the school day.
- Lunch shall be served between 10:00am – 2:00pm.
- Menus shall be created/reviewed by a Registered Dietitian or other certified nutrition professional.
- All school nutrition program directors, managers, and staff shall meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals.

In addition, the District’s nutrition services shall:

- Notify parents of the availability of the breakfast, lunch, and summer food programs and shall be encouraged to determine eligibility for reduced or free meals.
- Restrict the scheduling of club/organizational meetings during the lunch period unless students are allowed to purchase lunch to be consumed during the meetings.
- Explore the use of nontraditional breakfast service models (such as breakfast in the classroom) to increase breakfast participation.

Foods and Beverages Sold Outside of the School Meals Program

- All food and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (“competitive” foods and beverages) shall, at a minimum, meet the standards established in USDA’s Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in Schools (Smart Snacks) rule. The standards are available at <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/smartsnacks.pdf>.
- The sale of foods and/or beverages containing caffeine (except for trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine) at all grade levels during the school day are prohibited.
- Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks standards may be sold through fundraisers during the school day. No restrictions are placed on the sale of food/beverage items sold outside of the school day.

Marketing

Schools will restrict food and beverage marketing to only those foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards set forth by USDA’s Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in Schools (Smart Snacks) rule. Marketing includes brand names, trademarks, logos, or tags except when placed on a food or beverage product/container; displays, such as vending machine exteriors; corporate/brand names, logos, trademarks on cups, posters, school supplies, education materials, food service equipment, and school equipment (e.g. message boards, scoreboards, uniforms); advertisements in school publications/mailings; sponsorship of school activities, fundraisers, or sports teams; educational incentive programs such as contests or programs; and free samples or coupons displaying advertising of a product.

Foods Provided but Not Sold

The District encourages foods offered on the school campus meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards including those provided at celebrations and parties and classroom snacks brought by staff or family members. Non-food celebrations will be promoted, and a list of ideas is available to staff and family members.

Nutrition Education

Nutrition curriculum shall be offered as part of a sequential, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote health.

- Curriculum will place an emphasis on: Promotion of adequate nutrient intake, healthy food preparation techniques, food safety, and healthy eating practices based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPlate; Skill development, such as reading labels to evaluate the nutrient quality of foods, meal planning, analysis of health information; and Media literacy and the problems associated with food marketing to children.
- Nutrition education is integrated into other subjects beyond health education.
- Schools will hang posters to encourage healthy eating such as USDA's Ten Tips

Nutrition Promotion

The District is committed to providing a school environment that promotes students to practice healthy eating and physical activity. Students shall receive consistent nutrition messages that promote health throughout schools, classrooms, cafeterias, and school media. The district will evaluate compliance with the Wellness Policy no less than once every three years. The assessment will include the extent to which each school is in compliance with the policy and how the policy compares to a model policy, as established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

- Each school will use the Smarter Lunchroom Self-Assessment Scorecard annually and set at least 1 action step to improve based off of the self-assessment scorecard.
- Breakfast and Lunch staff are trained to prompt students to select fruits and vegetables.
- Participation in fruit or vegetable programs like the "Great Lakes Apple Crunch" – to encourage students to select locally grown, healthy fruits or vegetables.

Physical Activity

The District shall also provide opportunities for students to participate in physical activity in addition to physical education. As such:

- Elementary schools shall offer at least 20 minutes of recess on all or most days during the school year (early dismissal/late arrival days are exempt).
- Outdoor recess shall be offered weather permitting, unless temperature is below 32 degrees or it is storming.
- Recess monitors/teachers shall encourage students to be active during recess.
- Teachers shall incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into "core" subject instruction when possible.
- Teachers shall offer short (3-5 minute) activity breaks throughout the school day. Resources and ideas are available through <http://minds-in-bloom.com/20-three-minute-brain-breaks/>.
- Schools shall provide physical activity opportunities for all students. Sports are offered for select grade levels at each campus before or after school.
- Activities include physical activity classes/clubs, physical activity in aftercare, intramurals, and varsity sports. District facilities shall be made available to students and community members. To rent

or reserve space community members can reach out to the front office and they will be connected with the facilities team.

Physical Education

- Requirement of a Bachelor's degree for Physical Education Teachers.
- The Athletic Director shall run training sessions at Data Days for Physical Education professional development.

The District shall provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. As such:

- All District elementary students in each grade shall receive at least 60 minutes of physical education per week throughout the school year.
- All District middle school students in each grade shall receive at least 40 minutes of physical education per week throughout the school year.
- In health education classes, the District shall include topics of physical activity, including: 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; and decreasing sedentary activities.

Other School Based Activities that Promote Wellness

As appropriate, schools shall support students, staff, and parents' efforts to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The District supports the implementation of other programs that help create a school environment that conveys consistent wellness messages in an effort to promote student well-being. Students shall be allowed to bring and carry throughout the day approved water bottles filled with only water. Physical activity may be used as a reward but not a punishment; physical activity should not be withheld as a punishment. Staff is strongly encouraged to model healthful eating habits, and are discouraged from eating in front of children/sharing food with children during regular class time, outside of activities related to the nutrition education curriculum.

Community Engagement

The District shall offer at least one family-focused events supporting health promotion (e.g., health fair, nutrition/physical activity open house) each year (HOPE Classic – listed below). The District shall inform and invite parents to participate in school-sponsored activities throughout the year. The District shall actively inform families and the public about the content of and any updates to the policy through websites and handouts. The District shall provide information on how the public can participate in the school wellness committee on an annual basis.

- HOPE Christian Schools – HOPE Classic annual basketball tournament. The tournament includes competition between school teams comprised of parents and staff members.
- HOPE partners with dental agencies to provide onsite cleanings to students

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Wellness Committee shall evaluate compliance with the Wellness Policy no less than once every three years. The assessment will include the extent to which each school is in compliance with the policy and how the policy compares to a model policy, as established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The District shall notify school staff, students, and households/families of the availability of the wellness report via newsletters and website postings. The report will be made available at <https://hopeschools.org/>. The District wellness policy shall be updated as needed based on evaluation results, District changes, release of new health science information/technology, and/or issuance of new federal or state

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1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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