



## **MCA Wellness Policy**

**Created:** September 9, 2022

### **Purpose**

To ensure all students possess the knowledge and skills necessary for effective decision-making and develop healthy lifestyles.

### **Goals**

MCA administration, in collaboration with staff, students and parents are encouraged to prepare and implement a comprehensive plan addressing health and wellness that includes:

- An overall school environment that encourages students to make healthy lifestyle choices in regard to eating habits and physical activity.
- A school nutrition and physical activity program that makes effective use of school and community resources to equitably serve the needs and interests of all students and staff while taking into consideration differences in cultural norms.
- Pleasant eating areas for students and staff with adequate time for unhurried eating.
- A food service program that employs well-prepared staff that serves appealing choices of nutritious foods.
- Opportunities and encouragement for staff to model healthy eating and movement habits.
- Services to ensure that students and staff with wellness-related health problems are referred to appropriate services for counseling or medical treatment.

### **Members & Stakeholders:**

Jennifer Hernandez (Assistant Head of School)

Raymonde Alcindor (Operations Manager)

Lisa Martin (Food Program and Operations Coordinator)

Taylor Parker (Operations Assistant)

Gabriella Pesce (Dean of Students)

Alisha Hackney, PhD, RN (School Nurse)

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## **I. Food Service Operation**

### **A. Management**

1. While we acknowledge that feeding of children is primarily a family responsibility, MCA is committed to ensuring a food service program supplements these efforts. Our food service program will ensure that all students have affordable access to the varied and nutritious food they need to remain healthy and achieve academic potential.
2. The management of our program will be under the guidance of our operations department.
3. City Fresh Foods will be the vendor for our food service program.

### **B. Program Requirements**

1. During each school day the food service program will provide breakfast, lunch and snack under nutritional guidelines of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National School Lunch and Breakfast Program and in accordance with the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Acts of 2010.
2. All MCA students are required to participate in the food service program. The only exception is if a student provides a note from their healthcare provider stating they are exempt from the school food program for medical reasons (i.e., allergies, nutritional concerns). In this instance, families are given the option to request special dietary meals from our vendor OR provide their student with breakfast, lunch and snack from home for the school day. If families choose the latter, students cannot receive any food provided by MCA due to medical concerns.

### **C. Staffing**

1. MCA will employ a Food Program and Operations Coordinator who is properly qualified, certified and/or credentialed, according to current

USDA professional standards, to administer the school food service program and satisfy reporting requirements.

2. In addition, MCA will employ an Operations Assistant that is properly trained according to recommendations from the operations department.
3. The Food Program and Operations Coordinator is encouraged to inform and collaborate with teachers and the school nurse about the school nutrition-food service environment and relevant nutrition education.

#### D. Eating Environment

1. Students and staff shall have adequate space to eat meals in pleasant surroundings and shall have adequate time to eat, relax, and socialize.
2. Students and staff will have at least 20 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 30 minutes after sitting down for lunch. Snacks will occur within 15 minute sit-down breaks throughout the school day.
3. Safe drinking water and convenience access to facilities for hand washing are available during all meal periods. MCA requires that free, safe and unflavored drinking water is available during the school day.
4. Students are required to bring in water bottles filled only with water for before, during, and after the school day.
5. In lieu of water bottle filling stations, bottled water is available as needed for both students and staff.

#### E. Food Safety

1. All food program team members will have a current ServSafe Certification.
2. All staff will complete professional development as outlined by the Operations Director.
3. All food is stored in refrigerators (at 37 degree Fahrenheit) within 15 minutes of arrival to MCA if not distributed right away.
4. MCA does not allow peanuts or nut products to be brought on site due to serious food allergies within our community.

## II. The School Nutrition Environment

### A. Competitive Food & Beverage Choices

- a. MCA does not allow for food and beverages, outside of that provided by our food program vendor, to be sold or served during the normal school day.

### B. Nutrition Promotion & Food and Beverage Marketing

- a. MCA implements the following practices to promote the marketing of healthy, nutritious foods:
  - i. Make sliced, whole or cut fruit available daily
  - ii. Place bright and colorful posters promoting healthy food options in hallways, classrooms, and the cafeteria

### C. Rewards, Incentives & Celebrations

- a. Rewards and incentives for academic performance should be given careful consideration as to the messages they send to students receiving them. If food is included in recognition of academic performance, it is suggested to be used in the general celebration of the achievement and not as the reward, whenever achievable, and must meet the nutrition state and federal standards as outlined in the Appendix of this policy. Foods and beverages must comply with whichever standard (state or federal) is stricter.
  - i. **Celebrations and parties:** MCA allows food to be incorporated into celebrations and parties at a teacher's discretion (after coordination with the school nurse) and all items must be peanut/nut-free.
  - ii. **Classroom treats/snacks provided by families:** MCA does not allow outside food to be provided by families. There are no exceptions.

### D. Staff Modeling

- a. MCA staff are encouraged to model healthy eating habits including using food and beverages that meet state and federal standards.

### III. Nutrition Education

MCA strives to provide nutrition education at all grade and developmental levels: integrated into other subjects, as part of health education and/or offer stand alone classes at each grade level. MCA staff members are encouraged to work with other partners to continue to develop the nutrition education curriculum and staff responsible for delivering this education will be certified and/or trained as appropriate.

In general, it is the goal of MCA to design nutrition education curriculum that:

- Provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health.
- Is consistent with the CDC's Characteristics of an Effective Health Education Curriculum; specifically, the four themes of:
  - Teaching functional health information (essential knowledge).
  - Shaping personal values and beliefs that support healthy behaviors.
  - Shaping group norms that value a healthy lifestyle.
  - Developing the essential health skills necessary to adopt, practice, and maintain health-enhancing behaviors
- Is taught using evidence-based curricula that are aligned with the National Health Education Standards and addresses the essential healthy eating and physical activity topics, and associated health outcomes based on behaviors. Education will also be focused on fresh and healthy local food choices and understanding food sources (ex. farm to table, etc).
- 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, nutritionally-dense food, low sugar/low sodium food items, and healthy food preparation methods.
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise, wellness practices, such as deep breathing, etc.).
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing.

#### **IV. Physical Activity**

To promote movement and physical activity, MCA will:

- Provide a physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable activities for all students.
- Discourage extended periods of inactivity (periods of two or more hours).
- Encourage offering opportunities for all students to participate in physical activity before and/or after the school day through a variety of methods including:
  - Physical activity clubs such as walking/running clubs
  - Competitive sports teams including: basketball, volleyball, soccer, and running
- Encourage after-school childcare programs to provide developmentally-appropriate physical activity for children and reduce or eliminate the time spent in sedentary activities such as watching television or videos.
- Ensure that all 3rd - 5th graders have a minimum of 2 hours of physical activity a week, not including recess.
- Ensure that all 6th - 8th graders have a minimum of 4 hours of physical activity a week, not including extracurricular activities.
- Provide physical activity breaks in the classroom through several brief periods of time during the school day.

#### **V. Policy Implementation Plan & Review**

##### **A. Implementation**

- a. MCA's Wellness Committee will provide the necessary communication with the building regarding the school's wellness policy and guidelines, including rationale, changes, and development by placing updated policies on the district website.

##### **B. Review**

- a. Food attendance will be taken on a daily basis to ensure an adequate inventory of meals and snacks are being distributed and received by students.

- b. The Wellness Committee will revisit the policy, guidelines, and relevant issues as needed and will update the Wellness policy based on the results of the triennial assessments.

## **VI. Resources**

The following resources were used in the development of the MCA Wellness Policy.

1. [Salem Public Schools Wellness Policy Guidelines](#)



## VII. Appendix

Category	State Standards: <a href="#">Massachusetts Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods &amp; Beverages in Public Schools</a>	Federal Standards: <a href="#">USDA Smart Snacks in School Standards</a>
<b>Saturated Fat Exemptions</b>	Reduced-fat cheese, part-skim mozzarella cheese limited to 1-ounce portions Products consisting of only dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fat, limited to 1-ounce portions No other combination products are exempt from the saturated fat standard.	Reduced-fat cheese, part-skim mozzarella cheese  Products consisting of only dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fat  These exemptions are not restricted by size; any size of the above items will be considered exempt from the USDA total fat restrictions.
<b>Sugar</b>	35% or less of their total weight from sugar	35% or less of their total weight from sugar
<b>Sugar Exemptions</b>	100% fruit with no added sugar Products consisting of only dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fat  Dried whole fruits/vegetables, dried whole fruit/vegetable pieces, dried dehydrated fruits/vegetables with no added nutritive sweeteners, and dried fruits with nutritive sweeteners that are required for processing and/or palatability purposes, i.e., cranberries, tart cherries, and blueberries  Fresh, frozen and canned fruits/vegetables with no added sweeteners except for fruits packed in 100% juice	100% fruit with no added sugar Products consisting of only dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fat  Dried whole fruits/vegetables, dried whole fruit/vegetable pieces, dried dehydrated fruits/vegetables with no added nutritive sweeteners, and dried fruits with nutritive sweeteners that are required for processing and/or palatability purposes, i.e., cranberries, tart cherries, and blueberries
<b>Sodium</b>	200 mg sodium or less per item as packaged or served  À la carte entrées should have a maximum of 480 mg of sodium per item.	240 mg sodium per item as packaged or served (Effective July 1, 2016 sodium standard will be no more than 200 mg sodium per item as packaged or served.)  À la carte entrées should have a maximum of 480 mg of sodium per item, unless they meet the exemption for NSLP/SBP entrée items.
<b>Grains</b>	All breads or grain-based products should be whole grain (whole grains should be listed as the first ingredient).	All breads or grain-based products should be whole grain (whole grains should be listed as the first ingredients).

	Grain items include crackers, granola bars, chips, bakery items, pasta, rice, etc.	Grain items include crackers, granola bars, chips, bakery items, pasta, rice, etc.
<b>Caffeine</b>	Foods and beverages in all schools must be caffeine free, with the exception of trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine.	Foods and beverages available in elementary and middle schools must be caffeine-free, with the exception of trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine.  Caffeinated foods and beverages are permitted to be sold in high schools
<b>Artificial Sweeteners</b>	Artificial sweeteners are not permitted.	Artificial sweeteners are permitted.
<b>Accompaniments</b>	All accompaniments must be included in the nutrient profile as part of the item served.	All accompaniments must be included in the nutrient profile as part of the item served.
<b>Sugar-free Chewing Gum</b>	There is no exemption for sugar-free chewing gum.	Sugar-free chewing gum is permitted.
<b>School Lunch/ Breakfast Program</b>	There is no exemption for NSLP/SBP entrées.	Entrée items sold as part of the NSLP/SBP are exempt from competitive food standards.
<b>Timing</b>	From midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day	From midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day
<b>Fundraising</b>	Massachusetts standards do not apply to fundraisers.	State education agencies must set a limited frequency for the number of allowable fundraisers. In the absence of an allowable number of exemptions, the number remains zero.