

St. Thomas Aquinas High School and Middle School

Wellness, Food and Beverage Policy

Rationale

Catholic education has a goal of developing an individual as a responsible member of the family, the Catholic faith community and the global community in which we live. Good health is essential to wholesome growth through the spiritual, mental, physical and social development of the individual as well as the community.

A major theme of Catholic social teaching, Human Dignity and the Value of All Life, carries the responsibility to care for the health and well-being of not only oneself but of others. The concept of wellness is a core principle undergirding both health and physical activity. The parable for the talents indicates that we are expected to develop our potential and our gifts. Another of the justice themes calls us to Care for God's Creation. There is a direct relationship between the health of the planet and the health of its human inhabitants.

The link between nutrition, physical activity and learning is well-documented. Healthy eating and activity patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and lifelong health. Healthy eating and physical activity, essential for healthy weight, are also linked to reducing risk for many chronic diseases. St. Thomas Aquinas High School and Middle School, and the community itself, have a responsibility to help students learn, establish and maintain lifelong, healthy eating and activity patterns.

Statement of Policy

St. Thomas Aquinas High School and Middle School is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children's health and well-being. It is the policy that:

- All students in grades 6-12 will have opportunities, support and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis and school staff will be encouraged to display healthy eating behaviors;
- Students will be provided access to a variety of affordable, nutritious and appealing foods that meet their health and nutrition needs while accommodating the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity of the student body in clean, safe and pleasant surroundings with adequate time to eat;
- Food and beverages sold or served throughout the school day will meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state and federal status and regulation as well as the maximum extent possible, incorporate the Dietary Guidelines for Americans;
- St. Thomas Aquinas High School and Middle School will maintain a food safety program that is based on the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system implemented with the intent of preventing food-borne illnesses.

Commitment to Nutrition

Minimum Requirements

General

- Administer Child Nutrition Programs by a school food service staff member that is properly qualified according to current professional standards.
- Offer school meal programs using the traditional meal pattern that meets the nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Ohio Department of Education, Office of Child Nutrition Programs.
- Encourage increased participation in the available federal Child Nutrition Programs (e.g., school lunch, breakfast, and milk programs).
- Establish food safety as a key component of all school food operations based on Food Code requirements for licensed facilities.
- Encourage students to make healthy food choices by emphasizing menu options that feature baked items (will limit fried foods), whole grains, fresh fruit and vegetables, and reduced-fat dairy products.
- Provide school food service staff routing professional development training opportunities.
- Follow USDAA Child Nutrition Program regulations restricting competitive food sales and serving of foods of minimal nutritional value.
- Encourage school-based organizations to use non-food items and/or healthful foods for contests and fundraising programs.
- Ensure all foods made available on campus comply with state and local food safety and sanitation regulations. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans and guidelines are implemented as required by Child Nutrition Program regulations regarding school meals.
- Ensure water is available to students during mealtimes at no charge. If water fountains are not available in eating or adjacent readily accessible areas, water will be offered via other means such as pitchers, coolers, etc.
- Monitor all food and beverages sold or served to students outside of the federally regulated child nutrition programs (i.e., vending, school stores, fundraising efforts) by school administration to ensure compliance with all local, state and federal statutes and regulations, including Ohio Senate Bill 210 and USDA Smart Snacks in Schools (applicable to schools participating in the NSLP). Nutrient density and portion size will be considered before permitting food and beverages to be sold or served to students. State-provided software (if provided and available) or Alliance for a Healthier Generation guidelines and software will be utilized to determine acceptability of items in relation to specific nutrition guidelines.

Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program will:

- Be appealing and attractive to children;
- Be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state and federal statutes and regulation;
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;
- Serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free white milk, fat-free flavored milk and nutritionally equivalent non-dairy alternatives (when required to be defined by USDA).

Food and Beverages Sold Individually

(i.e., all foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc.)

St. Thomas Aquinas High School and Middle School will ensure that student access to foods and beverages meet federal, state and local policies and guidelines. The food and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal program will, at a minimum, meet the Ohio Senate Bill 210 nutrition requirements for evaluating food and beverage items to sell a la carte. Schools participating in the NSLP will also follow the USDA Smart Snacks in School standards when they are more restrictive than SB 210. St. Thomas Aquinas High School and Middle School will comply with the most recent guidelines for competitive food sales issued by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation in respect to the sale of a la carte food items.

A food item sold individually:

(See the Alliance's School Competitive Food Guidelines and USDA Smart Snack in Schools, Appendix A)

- Will have no more than 180 calories for middle school students and 200 calories for high school students;
- Will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of its calories from saturated fats with zero trans fat;
- Will have no more than 35% of its weight from added sugars;
- Will contain no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for snack items (chips, cereals, crackers, french fries, baked goods, etc.), no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats, and soups.

A beverage item sold individually:

(See Senate Bill 210- Beverage restrictions and USDA Smart Snacks in School Beverage Guidelines in Appendix B)

- Elementary K-4: Limited to water, milk and 8 ounces or less of 100% fruit juice (or fruit/water blend with no added sweeteners) with no more than 160 calories per 8 ounces. NO OTHER BEVERAGES ALLOWED.
- Elementary 5-8: Same limitations as K-4 except 10 ounces of juice are allowed with no more than 160 calories per 8 ounces.
- High School: Water, milk and up to 12 ounces of juice with no more than 160 calories per 8 ounces. Other beverages are allowed as long as they are 12 ounces or less with no more than 66 calories per 8 ounces (larger size beverages are allowed but limited to 10 calories per 8 ounces).

Commitment to Comprehensive Health Education

Minimum Requirements

- Provide ½ Carnegie unit of comprehensive education for graduation.
- Offer comprehensive health education in grades K-8. Include in each grade level, as stated in the Graded Course of Study, the 5 strands related to real-life choices; nutrition, growth and development, disease prevention and control, safety and first aid, and health issues and dangerous substances.

Commitment to Physical Activity

Minimum Requirements

- Provide physical education opportunities for all students grades K-8.
- Offer a planned sequential program of physical education instruction incorporating individual and group activities, which are student-centered and taught in a positive environment.
- Create wider opportunities for students who voluntarily participate in extracurricular physical activity programs.
- Incorporate physical activity such as stretching before classes and at appropriate intervals during the day.
- If the schedule allows, provide for physical activity before the lunch period.
- Promote school-wide challenges in conjunction with charitable events such as a Walk for Diabetes or Hoops for Hearts.

Commitment to Healthy School Environment

Minimum Requirements

- Provide a clean, safe, enjoyable meal environment for students.
- Provide positive, motivating messages, both verbal and non-verbal, about healthy lifestyle practices throughout the school setting. All school personnel will help reinforce these positive messages.
- Promote healthful eating, physical activity, and healthy lifestyles to students, parents, teachers, administrators and the community at school events(e.g., school registration, parent-teacher conferences, PTU meetings, open houses, health fairs, book fairs, teacher in-services, sporting and other events).
- Ensure and adequate time for students to enjoy eating healthy foods with friends. Schools shall provide at least 10 minutes from the time the student sits down until the end of the period to consume lunch. However, following the National Association of State Boards of Education recommendations, every effort will be made to provide students with 20 minutes of sitting down to eat lunch.
- Make efforts to schedule recess for elementary grades before lunch so that children will come to lunch less distracted and ready to eat.
- Make available drinking fountains or other accessible drinking water so that students have access to water at meals and throughout the day.
- Refrain from using food as a reward or punishment for student behaviors.
- Avoid scheduling tutoring, club/ organization meetings, and other activities that interfere with appropriate mealtime allotments whenever possible. Activities that are scheduled during mealtimes should be structured to accommodate an appropriate mealtime for students.
- Annually before the beginning of the school year, review with staff and students the safety and crisis plans of the school.

- Review emergency procedures with parents.
- Update parent and faculty handbooks on a regular basis to reflect health and safety concerns.

Commitment to Implementation

Minimum Requirements

- Conduct a review of the progress toward Health and Wellness Policy goals each year to identify areas for improvement.
- Review implementation of wellness policy in conjunction with the ongoing OCSAA accreditation process.