

Early Light Academy Wellness Policy



PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the best possible mental and physical health environment for the students of Early Light Academy (“ELA” or the “School”).

ELA’s Board recognizes that there is a link between good health and a student’s ability to learn effectively and perform at their highest academic potential. The Board also recognizes education and establishment of good eating habits, and a desire for physical activity must begin at a young age. ELA is committed to providing nutritional education, physical activity and a healthy learning environment for its students and staff.

- I. Health and Wellness Committee: Under the direction of the Board and the Executive Director, a Health and Wellness Committee (the “Committee”) will be established to oversee wellness efforts, review wellness goals, monitor compliance with this policy, and as necessary recommend changes to this policy. The Committee may consist of but is not limited to parents, students, food service staff, members of the Board, the Executive Director, teachers, health professionals and members of the community.
- II. Nutrition Education: The primary purpose of nutrition education is to build knowledge and skills that will help children make healthy eating and physical activity choices now and throughout their lives. The following are some of the ways the School will reach its goal of educating its students in nutrition and helping them make healthy eating and physical activity choices:
 - a. Healthy eating habits will be taught and supported for students and staff by encouraging teachers, whenever possible, to use healthy nutrition facts in learning skills such as reading, writing and math.
 - b. Food will not be used as punishment or rewards; however, nutrition education will be provided and nutrition incentive programs will be encouraged.
 - c. Promote nutritional and physical awareness and healthy lifestyles through assemblies that may include gymnastics or dance.
 - d. Increase awareness of healthy lifestyles such as regular medical and dental check ups.
 - e. Promote safety in and out of the home while partnering with local law enforcement.
 - f. Encourage nutrition education not only in health but also in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences and elective subjects.
 - g. Encourage and educate parents in ways to provide healthy and affordable sack lunches.
- III. 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 participation

in school meal programs. ELA will, in addition to doing the items set forth in the Nutrition Education section set forth above, do the following to help it achieve its goal of promoting nutrition to its students and staff:

- a. Ensure that its students and staff receive consistent nutrition messages throughout the school buildings, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.
- b. Market and advertise nutritious foods and beverages to its students and staff.
- c. Encourage participation in ELA's meal programs.

IV. Physical Activity: The Board recognizes the importance of physical activity for student health and academic achievement. The Board encourages the Executive Director to implement programs to ensure that students engage in healthy levels of vigorous physical activity to promote and develop the student's physical, mental, emotional and social well-being. The following goals are some of the ways ELA hopes to achieve this:

- a. Provide a wide variety of physical activities and introduce students to many different sports and ways of getting physically active. This may be done through PE, assemblies, after school activities or in the classroom.
- b. Provide daily recess for all elementary students for at least 20 minutes per day and 30 minutes of fitness education per week, schedule permitting.
- c. Use a variety of innovative lesson plans to increase physical movement in the classroom.
- d. When activities such as mandatory testing or inclement weather or air quality make it necessary for students to stay indoors for long periods of time, students will be given periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to participate in some activity or movement.
- e. Physical education activities should teach students cooperation and teamwork, good sportsmanship, positive self-image, and personal achievement.
- f. Appropriate alternative activities should be provided for students with physical disabilities.
- g. Exemptions from physical activities are appropriate for ill or injured students.
- h. Parent volunteers are encouraged to run after school sports teams or clubs for students.

V. Healthy and Safe School Environment: ELA recognizes that a healthy and safe school environment is necessary in promoting and sustaining the nutritional, physical and emotional health of its students and staff. This will be provided in the following ways:

- a. Provide a clean, safe, and enjoyable lunchroom for students.
- b. Provide student access to restroom use for washing hands and a hand sanitizer available in the lunchroom and educate students on the importance of washing hands.
- c. Provide enough space and serving areas to ensure all students have an appropriate place to eat in the lunchroom.
- d. Create an environment that fosters good eating habits, enjoyment of meals, good manners and respect for others.
- e. ELA will make every effort to accommodate children with allergies.
- f. ELA will make drinking fountains available so that students can get water at meals and throughout the day.

- VI. Guidelines for Foods and Beverages Provided but not Sold at School: The purpose of these guidelines is to support this policy, specifically in the classroom. ELA's Board wants to promote a healthy classroom environment for every student, with as little distraction as possible to the learning process. This will be supported in the following ways:
- a. Food will only be allowed in the classroom as part of a lesson plan and at the approval of the Executive Director in advance. (For example, a teacher may use an orange to teach fractions.)
 - b. No soda will be provided at any time during school or after school activities for students.
 - c. No birthday treats will be allowed for distribution in class.
 - d. Up to four class parties will be allowed per school year.
 - i. The Executive Director will approve each grade level or department team's plan for these class parties in advance.
 - ii. Some healthy snack choices must be offered to students as part of these class parties.
 - iii. The Health and Wellness Committee may create and provide a "Healthy and Affordable Snack" list to be approved and distributed.
 - iv. No soda will be allowed for students at class parties.
 - e. Food provided at after school functions will be under the direction and approval of the Executive Director of ELA.
- VII. Guidelines for Foods and Beverages Sold at School: ELA is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on School property during the school day support healthy eating. ELA is also 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. These commitments by ELA are supported by the following:
- a. When participating in the USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program ("NSLP") and School Breakfast Program ("SBP"), the School will offer school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs that are accessible to all students; are appealing and attractive to children; are served in clean and pleasant settings; and meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations.
 - b. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs during the school day will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, reduce childhood obesity, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day, and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits. A summary of the standards and information, as well as a Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools, are available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/guide-smart-snacks-school>. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold during the school day, which may include, but are not limited to, à la carte

options in cafeterias, vending machines, in-school fundraisers, school stores, and snack or food carts.

- c. ELA intends to protect and promote students' health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold at the school in accordance with this policy. Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on School property during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

- VIII. Food Pantry: Recognizing the connection between nutrition, student wellness, and academic success, ELA may maintain a food pantry to help meet the nutritional needs of its students during the school day and to assist families experiencing food insecurity outside of the regular school day. The School will make information regarding its food pantry available to students and families as appropriate. Any food pantry operated by the School will not interfere with or violate the requirements of the USDA child nutrition programs in which the School participates.
- IX. Evidence-Based Strategies in Determining Goals: ELA will review and consider evidence-based strategies in determining the goals pursued under this policy.
- X. Implementation Plan: ELA will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this policy. The plan will delineate roles, responsibilities, actions, and timelines. It will include information about who will be responsible to make what change(s), by how much, where and when, as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available at the School, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.
- XI. Annual Notification of Policy: ELA will actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about this policy, including its content and any updates to the policy. The School will make this information, including a copy of this policy, available on the School website and/or in School-wide communications. ELA may also provide information about the school nutrition environment, such as a summary of the School's events or activities related to the implementation of this policy. Annually, the School will also provide on its website or through a different school-wide communication method the name and contact information of the School personnel leading and coordinating the Committee, as well as information on how the public can get involved with the Committee.
- XII. Triennial Progress Assessments: At least once every three years ELA will evaluate compliance with this policy to assess the implementation of the policy. The triennial assessment will describe the extent to which the School is in compliance with this policy, how this policy compares to model wellness policies, and the progress made in attaining the goals described in this policy. The Committee will participate in the triennial assessment, but the Executive Director is responsible for managing the

triennial assessment. The School will notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress reports by posting the reports on the School's website.

- XIII. Revisions and Updates to Policy: The Committee will make updates or modifications to this policy based on the results of the triennial progress assessments and/or as School priorities change, community needs change, wellness goals are met, new health science, information, and technology emerge, or new federal or state guidance or standards are issued. This policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial progress assessment.
- XIV. Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications: ELA is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of this wellness policy. The School will actively communicate ways in which representatives of the Committee and others in the community can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of this policy. The School may communicate this through a variety of electronic and non-electronic means, such as email or displaying notices on the School's website, newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents. ELA desires that all families and other members of the school community are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to this policy, as well as how to get involved and support this policy.
- XV. Recordkeeping: ELA will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of this policy at the School and/or on the School's computer network. Documentation maintained will include but may not be limited to:
 - a. A copy of the current written wellness policy;
 - b. Documentation demonstrating that this policy has been made available to the public;
 - c. Documentation of efforts to review and update this policy, including an indication of who was involved in the update of this policy and methods/means ELA uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the Committee;
 - d. Documentation to demonstrate compliance with this policy's annual public notification requirement;
 - e. The most recent triennial assessment on the implementation of this policy; and
 - f. Documentation demonstrating the most recent triennial assessment on the implementation of this policy has been made available to the public.