



## Wellness Policy

### GOALS

Washington School for Girls wellness policy will cover the following:

1. Include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.
2. Establish nutrition guidelines for all foods available on campus during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.
3. Include safeguards to ensure access for all children to healthy foods and to fight hunger and nutrient deficiencies.
4. Provide assurance that those guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture.
5. Promote student wellness by implementing Coordinated School Health Program components.
6. Establish a plan for measuring the impact and implementation of the local wellness policy, including designation of one or more persons with operational responsibility for ensuring that the schools meet the wellness policy.
7. Involve parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, school board, school administrators, and the public, in development of the local Wellness Policy.

## **VISION/STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY**

Washington School for Girls Board of Directors recognizes that nutrition education; food served in schools and physical activity each affect student wellness. The Board also recognizes the important connection between a healthy diet and a student's ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards in school.

The WSG Board recognizes that it is the District's role, as part of the larger community, to model and actively practice, through policies and procedures, the promotion of family health, physical activity, and good nutrition.

The WSG Board further recognizes that the sharing and enjoyment of food and participation in physical activities are fundamental experiences for District residents and are primary ways to nurture and celebrate our cultural diversity. These fundamental human experiences are vital bridges for building friendships, forming inter-generational bonds, and strengthening communities.

## **PREAMBLE**

Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;

Whereas, a healthy diet increases a student's ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards in school;

Whereas, good health fosters student attendance and education;

Whereas, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity;

Whereas, each day, students and their parents trust that the foods offered at school are nutritious and safe, and that the WSG Board is responsible for ensuring the safety of foods provided at school;

Whereas, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of death in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood;

Whereas, 33% of high school students do not participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and 72% of high school students do not attend daily physical education classes;

Whereas, only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid;

Whereas, nationally, the items most commonly sold from school vending machines, school stores, and snack bars include low-nutrition foods and beverages, such as soda, sports drinks, imitation fruit juices, chips, candy, cookies, and snack cakes;

Whereas, community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Thus, the Washington School for Girls is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy and goal of Washington School for Girls that:

- ✚ All students in grades 3 – 8 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- ✚ Food and beverages served or sold at the school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- ✚ Washington School for Girls will ensure that no student goes hungry during the school day.
- ✚ Washington School for Girls will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.

- ✦ Washington School for Girls will work closely with its caterer, DC Central Kitchen, to provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- ✦ Washington School for Girls participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
- ✦ Washington will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

## **SECTION 1: Ensuring Quality Nutrition Education, Health Education and Physical Education.**

Washington School for Girls aims to provide age-appropriate and culturally sensitive instruction in nutrition, health and physical education that help students develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to enjoy healthy eating habits and a physically active lifestyle.

### **Health and Nutrition**

Washington School for Girls will provide nutrition education that:

- ✦ is offered 3 times per week for 45 minutes at each grade level, as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program 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 classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;

- ✦ includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, and taste testing
- ✦ promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- ✦ emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- ✦ links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- ✦ teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- ✦ includes training for teachers and other staff, as part of professional development.

### **Physical Activity**

Washington School for Girls Board acknowledges the positive benefits of physical activity for student health and academic achievement. Recognizing that physical education is a crucial and integral part of a child's education, the district will provide opportunities 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. Besides promoting high levels of personal achievement and positive self-image, physical education activities should teach students how to cooperate in the achievement of common goals.

The components of WSG's physical education program shall include a variety of kinesthetic activities, including team, individual, and cooperative sports and physical activities, as well as aesthetic movement forms, such as dance and yoga.

Students shall be given opportunities for physical activity through a range of before-and/or after-school programs including, but not limited to, intramurals, interscholastic athletics, and physical activity clubs.

The WSG Board will ensure that:

- ✦ Washington School for Girls will continue to participate in after school and during school activities in cooperation with its partners at THEARC (Town Hall Education, Arts and Recreation Campus) such as: The Boys and Girls Club, The Washington Ballet, Children's Health Center;
- ✦ The required recess time will remain 30 minutes per day, and recess will not be determined by or at the discretion of teachers;
- ✦ Health and Physical education is required for grades 3<sup>rd</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> for 90 minutes per week;
- ✦ Physical education teachers shall develop and implement a curriculum that connects and demonstrates the interrelationship between physical activity, good nutrition, and health;
- ✦ An appropriate alternative activity to physical education shall be provided for students with a physical disability that may restrict excessive physical exertion;
- ✦ Physical education staff shall appropriately limit the amount or type of physical exercise required of students during air pollution episodes, excessively hot weather, or other inclement conditions.
- ✦ Students shall have opportunities to enjoy physical activity and nutrition education through participation in community-sponsored gardening programs, if available.

## **SECTION 2: Establishing Nutritional Guidelines for All Foods Served on Campus During the School Day.**

A component of the education mission of Washington School for Girls is teaching students to establish and maintain life-long healthy eating habits. This mission shall be accomplished, in part, through serving healthy food in the schools. The WSG Board will ensure that:

### **Free and Reduced-Price Meals**

- ✦ WSG provides a free lunch to all students who attend this school. Maximum participation in the school meal program will be achieved by developing a

coordinated, comprehensive outreach and promotion plan, and by putting systems in place to ensure the elimination of the stigma of accepting “free lunch.

- ✦ All children will have healthy food available at no cost;
- ✦ WSG will provide students with at least 20 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 30 minutes after sitting down for lunch;

### **Breakfast**

- ✦ WSG will operate a universal *free for all* School breakfast program through take home flyers, school and district newsletters, home mailings, etc.

### **Nutritional Quality of School Meals**

- ✦ The nutritional value of the food served will improve upon USDA standards through provision of nutritious, fresh, tasty, locally grown food that reflects community and cultural diversity;
- ✦ All milk served and sold through school means will be either low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk<sup>1</sup> or nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA);
- ✦ Half of the grains served will be whole grain; and

### **After School Snacks**

- ✦ Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children’s diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children’s nutritional needs, children’s ages, and other considerations

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<sup>1</sup> As recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*

**Food and Beverages Sold Individually in Vending Machines, A la Carte Lines,  
Fundraisers, and School Stores**

- ✚ WSG does not have vending machines, a la Carte Lines, or a school store, and does not sell food or drink at any time.
- ✚ The following beverages shall not be provided:
  - Soft drinks, sports drinks, punches, and iced teas
  - Fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50% real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; and
  - Drinks containing coffee, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk.
- ✚ All snacks sweets, or side dishes served on the school site outside of the federal school meal program shall meet all of the following standards:
  - Have 35% or less of its total calories from fat;
  - Have 10% or less of its total calories from saturated plus trans-fat;
  - Have 35% or less of its weight from sugars, excluding sugars, excluding sugars occurring naturally in fruits, vegetables, and dairy ingredients; and
  - Have no more than 230 mg of sodium per serving for chips, cereals, crackers, French fries, baked goods, and other snack items; contain no more than 480 mg of sodium per serving for pastas, meats, and soups; and will contain no more than 600 mg of sodium for pizza, sandwiches, and main dishes.

**Food in other areas of the School Environment**

- ✚ WSG serves healthy snacks each day
- ✚ No healthy food or beverage item may be advertised on school grounds, and fast food and “branded” food items shall not be offered for sale as part of any school meal program;

## FOOD MARKETING IN SCHOOLS

School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, schools will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually (above<sup>2</sup>). School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages<sup>3</sup> is prohibited. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products is encouraged.

## REWARDS

WSG will not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above), as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

## CELEBRATIONS

WSG will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above).

**SECTION 3: Assure that guidelines for school meals are not less restrictive than those set at the federal level by the Secretary of Agriculture.**

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<sup>2</sup> Advertising of low-nutrition foods and beverages is permitted in supplementary classroom and library materials, such as newspapers, magazines, the Internet, and similar media, when such materials are used in a class lesson or activity, or as a research tool.

<sup>3</sup> Schools should not permit general brand marketing for food brands under which more than half of the foods or beverages do not meet the nutrition standards for foods sold individually or the meals are not consistent with school meal nutrition standards.

Washington School for Girls will review this policy and ensure that the policies are not less restrictive than those set by the Secretary of Agriculture or state law. WSG, in conjunction with its lunch caterer, assures that all meals comply with federal standards.

**SECTION 4: Establish a plan for measuring the impact and implementation of the local wellness policy.**

The school shall develop a steering committee for the development and monitoring of the wellness policy; and this committee shall also be responsible for evaluation of the policy annually.

**SECTION 5: Community Involvement**

WSG is located at THEARC (Town Hall Education, Arts and Recreation Campus) and The VIEW at Our Lady of Perpetual Help, and therefore is included in many community programs, and actively recruits members of the local community to be involved in all aspects of the school community, and is also aware that it can consult the input and feedback from Community Forums conducted throughout the year.