



Riverside Christian School Wellness Policy

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Riverside Christian School Wellness Policy

Preamble

The Bible Motivates

As a Christian school, we believe that God created us and gives us all things, including our health. In 1 Corinthians 6:19, the Bible tells us that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit that we received from God, so we should treat them well! Because of that, our vision and goal is to promote whole wellness and a healthy lifestyle to students and staff at Riverside Christian School.

Riverside Christian School (hereto referred to as RCS) is committed to the optimal development of every student. RCS believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, we need to create positive, safe and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

In accordance with the Model Local School Wellness Policy preamble, research shows that proper nutrition and physical activity before, during and after the school day are strongly correlated with positive academic outcomes. For example, student participation in the School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism and better performance on cognitive tasks. Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables and dairy products is associated with lower grades. Participation in active transportation to and from school (e.g., walking and bicycling), recess, physical activity breaks, physical education and extracurricular activities involving physical activity results in better academic outcomes for students. Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.

This policy outlines RCS's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students at RCS have access to healthy foods throughout the school day, through school meals that meet the 2020/2025 dietary guidelines;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active before, during and after school;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- School staff are encouraged to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of RCS in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- RCS establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

Adding to the wellness goals and procedures stated above is the desire to have the students and staff of RCS be spiritually healthy. We will provide opportunities, in and out of the classroom, to promote this desired outcome. This policy applies to all students and staff at RCS.

I. School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

RCS will convene a representative wellness committee (hereto referred to as the WC) that meets at least four times per year to assess goals for and oversee school health and wellness policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of this RCS wellness policy.

The WC membership will represent all school levels and include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program; physical education teachers; health education teachers; school health professionals; school administrator, school board members; health professionals; and the general public. To the extent possible, the WC will reflect the diversity of the community.

Leadership

The Activities Director will convene the WC and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and will ensure the school's compliance with the policy.

The designated official for oversight is Activity Director, Eric Morrow. He can be reached at ericm@rcsrams.org or 218-773-1770.

Other WC members:

Name	Title	Role on Committee
Eric Morrow	Activities Director	Convene meetings, lead planning and implementation
Danielle Villano	Parent	Nutrition Specialist
Erin Brown	PE Teacher	Increase physical activity school-wide Give a parent's and teacher's perspective
Parent Representatives	Parents	Give a parent's perspective and help develop ideas and goals
Student representatives from grades 6-12	Students	Generate ideas to promote wellness

II. Accountability

Annual Notification of Policy

The RCS Wellness Policy can be found at rcsrams.com.

Triennial Progress Assessments

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, at least once every three years, RCS will assess our wellness policy by measuring:

- The extent to which the school is in compliance with the wellness policy;

- The extent to which RCS's wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of RCS's wellness policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is Eric Morrow, Activities Director, who can be reached at ericm@rcsrams.org or 218-773-1770.

The WC will monitor the school's compliance with this wellness policy and sponsor education and activities that promote wellness within RCS.

RCS will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The WC will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual School Health Index and triennial assessments and/or as the school's priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.

Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications

RCS will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on RCS's website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. RCS will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that RCS is communicating important school information with parents.

RCS will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. RCS will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

III. Nutrition

School Meals

According to the Model Local School Wellness Policy, children consume as many as half of their daily calories at school. Our school is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and meets the guideline requirements of the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

RCS participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and MN Kindergarten Milk. RCS is committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students;

- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (RCS offers reimbursable school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards.)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using the following marketing and merchandising techniques:
 - Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chaffing dishes or hotel pans).
 - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily.
 - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students.
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
 - White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers.
 - Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development.
- Students will be allowed at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal and are seated.
- Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
- Participation in Federal child nutrition programs will be promoted among students and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their children's school.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals. These school nutrition personnel will refer to USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day* and throughout the school campus*. RCS students may bring their water bottle to school and lunch and can use it throughout the school day.

- All water sources and containers will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene and health safety standards.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

RCS is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus* during the school day* support healthy eating. The only foods available for purchase to RCS students during the school day are an extra milk and/or an extra entree at lunch. Both the milk and the extra entree are compliant with the Smart Snacks standards for food and beverage sold to students during the school day.

Snacks

RCS encourages all foods offered on the school campus to meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

- Classroom snacks brought by parents. RCS encourages the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards being used for classroom snacks sent from home. A list of snack ideas meeting the standards will be given to parents.

Celebrations and Rewards

- Rewards and incentives. RCS will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a list of alternative ways to reward children. Non-food celebrations will be promoted. Food will not be withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

Fundraising

RCS does not sell food for fundraising purposes during the school day.

RCS will promote the use of non-food fundraisers, and encourage those promoting physical activity (such as walk-a-thons, Jump Rope for Heart, fun runs, etc.).

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 encourage participation in school meal programs.

RCS will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through:

- Implementation of the evidence-based marketing and merchandising techniques (My Plate).

Nutrition Education

RCS will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Health education is integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences and elective subjects;
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, and farm visits;
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products and healthy food preparation methods;
- Links with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities and nutrition-related community services;
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and
- Includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.
- Nutrition and physical activity education are taught using evidence-based curricula that are aligned with the National Health Education Standards and address the essential healthy eating and physical activity topics.

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus* during the school day* will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Food and beverage marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage marketing often includes an oral, written, or graphic statements made for promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product.¹ This term includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Brand names, trademarks, logos or tags, except when placed on a physically present food or beverage product or its container.

As the RCS nutrition services/Athletics Department/ PTO reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by the wellness policy. The only foods available for purchase to RCS students during the school day are an extra milk and/or an extra entree at lunch. Both the milk and the extra entree are compliant with the Smart Snacks standards for food and beverage sold to students during the school day.

IV. Physical Activity

Children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A students' physical activity can be provided not only through school physical education class, but also with recess, before or after school time and with classroom breaks throughout the day.

To the extent possible, RCS will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. RCS will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

- Through shared-use, outdoor physical activity facilities and spaces will be open to students, their families, and the community outside of school hours.
- RCS will ensure that inventories of physical activity supplies and equipment are known and, when necessary, will work with community partners to ensure sufficient quantities of equipment are available to encourage physical activity for as many students as possible.

Physical Education

RCS will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts. The curriculum will support the essential components of physical education.

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. RCS will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

All elementary students in each grade will receive physical education for at least 90 minutes per week throughout the school year.

All **secondary students** (middle and high school) are required to take the equivalent of one academic year of physical education.

RCS physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments and will use criterion-based reporting for each student.

- Students will be moderately to vigorously active for at least 50% of class time during most or all physical education class sessions.

Recess

Students in grades K-3 will have at least 30 minutes of recess daily. Students in grades 4-8 will have 20 minutes of recess daily. Teachers will be encouraged to send students to recess at every opportunity. RCS will provide teachers and other school staff with a list of ideas for alternative ways to discipline students.

Outdoor recess will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play. Students will be allowed outside for recess except when outdoor temperature or wind chill factor is below zero, during or “code red” (heat alert) days, during storms with lightening or thunder, at times of high mosquito count, or at the discretion of the building administrator based on his/her best judgment of safety conditions.

In the event that the school or district must conduct indoor recess, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable.

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active, and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Classroom Physical Activity Breaks

RCS recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered periodic opportunities to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. RCS recommends teachers provide short (3-5-minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom times at least three days per week. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

RCS will provide resources and links to resources, tools, and technology with ideas for classroom physical activity breaks.

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

RCS will support classroom teachers incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects by providing annual professional development opportunities and resources, including information on leading activities, activity options, as well as making available background material on the connections between learning and movement.

Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Before and After School Activities

RCS offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity either before and/or after the school day (or both) through a variety of methods. RCS will encourage students to be physically active before by allowing any students at school between 7:45am and 8:20am, to have an active recess. The after school program will provide opportunities for students to have choice in large muscle activities.

V. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

RCS will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria and physical activity facilities. RCS will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development and strong educational outcomes.

RCS is encouraged to coordinate content across curricular areas that promote student health, such as teaching nutrition concepts in mathematics, with consultation provided by either the school or RCS's curriculum experts.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of the wellness policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the WC.

Community Partnerships

RCS will continue relationships with community partners, as stated below, in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

RCS will continue to partner with Relate Care for 5th grade students as they learn about health in adolescence, participate with the NDSU Extension office for 4th grade "Project Pizza" education as these programs remain available. High School students are also visiting the lab of UND Nutrition and Dietetics for a cooking camp.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

RCS will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

As described in the "Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications" subsection, RCS will use electronic mechanisms as well as non-electronic mechanisms, to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

RCS will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. RCS promotes staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management that are accessible and free.

Professional Learning

When feasible, RCS will offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school (e.g., increasing the use of kinesthetic teaching approaches or incorporating nutrition lessons into math class). Professional learning will help the RCS staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing academic improvement plans/efforts.

Glossary:

Extended School Day – the time during, before and after school that includes activities such as clubs, intramural sports, band and choir practice, drama rehearsals and more.

School Campus - areas that are owned or leased by the school and used at any time for school-related activities, including on the outside of the school building, school buses or other vehicles used to transport students, athletic fields and stadiums (e.g., on scoreboards, coolers, cups, and water bottles), or parking lots.

School Day – the time between midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

Triennial – recurring every three years.

Appendix A

School Contacts

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