

Birch Grove Community School
Charter District #4145



Wellness Policies
On
Physical Activity and Nutrition

Birch Grove Community School wellness policy on Physical Activity and Nutrition

Preamble

NOTE: Birch Grove Community School Refers to Charter School District #4145.

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

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, heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths 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, 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, school districts around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints; and

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

Thus, the Birch Grove Community School is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Birch Grove Community School that:

- The school district 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.
- All students in grades K-5 will have opportunities, support and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

- Qualified child nutrition professionals will 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.
- To the maximum extent practicable, Birch Grove Community School will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the National School Lunch Program)
- Birch Grove Community School 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.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. School Health Council

Birch Grove Community School will create, strengthen or work within existing school health councils to develop, implement, monitor, review and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The councils also will serve as resources to our school site for implementing those policies. (A school health council consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community and should include parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, members of the school board, school administrators, teachers, health professionals and members of the public.)

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch Program will:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state and federal statutes and regulations;
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;

- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.

Birch Grove Community School will provide opportunities to engage students and parents, through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys, in selecting foods sold through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful and appealing food choices. In addition, # 4145 will share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus or other point-of-purchase materials.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals. Birch Grove Community School will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. Toward this end, Birch Grove Community School will provide all children the same color lunch and milk tickets, regardless of income; promotes the availability of school meals to all students; and/or uses nontraditional methods for serving school meals.

Meal Times and Scheduling. Birch Grove Community School will:

- provide students with at least 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch should be scheduled between 10:45 a.m. and 12:45 p.m.;
- not schedule tutoring, club or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- investigate appropriate schedules to place recess periods (in elementary schools);
- provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff. Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school district's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs will include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages. Birch Grove Community School will discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Foods and Beverages Sold Individually and Outside the Reimbursable Food Program

Elementary Schools. The school food service program will approve and/or provide all food and beverage sales to students in elementary schools. Given young children's limited nutrition skills, food in elementary schools will be sold as balanced meals.

Beverages:

Soda will not be allowed in Birch Grove Community School.

Snacks. Snacks served during the school day or through 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. Birch Grove Community School will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages and other considerations. The district will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers, after-school program personnel and parents.

Rewards. Birch Grove Community School will not use foods or beverages that do not meet the 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. Birch Grove Community School should limit celebrations that involve non-nutritive foods during the school day. The district will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents, students and teachers.

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion. Birch Grove Community School aims to teach, encourage and support healthy eating by students Birch Grove Community School will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered 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, taste testing, farm visits and school gardens;

- 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.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting. For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (i.e., at least 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities such as watching television;
- opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Communications with Parents. Birch Grove Community School will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The school will encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages. Birch Grove Community School will provide parents a list of foods that meet the district's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards and fundraising activities. In addition, the district/school will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

The school will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter or other take-home materials; special events; or physical education homework.

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). School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages is prohibited. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products, is encouraged.

Staff Wellness. Birch Grove Community School highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Staff wellness will be a component of the Health Council's agenda.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Daily Physical Activity or Physical Education. The Health Council will promote opportunities for all students in grades K-5 to receive daily physical activity or physical education. All physical education will be taught by a education teacher.

Daily Recess. All elementary school students will have at least 30 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools will encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Birch Grove Community School will discourage extended periods (i.e., periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain inactive for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity and Punishment. Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.

Safe Routes to School. Birch Grove Community School will assess and, if necessary and to the extent possible, make needed improvements to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school. When appropriate, the district will work together with local public works, public safety and/or police departments in those efforts. Birch Grove Community School will explore the availability of federal "safe routes to school" funds, administered by the state department of transportation, to finance such improvements. Birch Grove Community School will encourage students to use public transportation when available and appropriate for travel to school, and will work with the local transit agency to provide transit passes for students. Birch Grove Community School will promote partnerships with local advocates to pursue implementation of safe routes to school.

Use of School Facilities Outside of School Hours. School spaces and facilities should be available to students, staff and community members before, during and after the school day, on weekends and during school vacations. These spaces and facilities also should be available to community agencies and organizations offering physical activity and nutrition programs. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring. The designee will ensure compliance with established district-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies.

School food service staff, at the school or district level, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the school director. In addition, Birch Grove Community School will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. If the Birch Grove Community School has not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, the district will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible.

Administration or designee will develop a summary report every three years on district-wide compliance with the district's established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies, based on input from schools within the district. That report will be provided to the school board and also distributed to all school health councils, parent/teacher organizations, school principals and school health services personnel in the district.

Policy Review. To help with the initial development of the of this policy, Birch Grove Community School's Health Council will review the schools' needs assessment every year to determine areas in need of improvement. The Health Council will meet annually during the year to review and revise the Wellness Policy.