

NEW ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

STUDENT WELLNESS POLICY

Updated September 2026

Purpose

New Academy Charter School recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being, growth, development, and readiness to learn. The Board is committed to providing an environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education and promotion, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience. In a healthy school environment, students will learn about and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices that can improve student achievement.

The Board adopts this policy based on the recommendations of the Wellness Committee and in accordance with applicable federal and Pennsylvania laws and regulations, including requirements governing the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), local school wellness policies, Smart Snacks in School, and current USDA school meal nutrition standards.

Policy Goals and School Responsibilities

To ensure the health and well-being of all students, the Board establishes that the school shall provide:

1. A comprehensive nutrition program consistent with applicable federal and state requirements.
2. Access to foods and beverages that meet applicable federal nutrition standards and school guidelines.
3. Physical education courses and opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity during the school day.
4. Curriculum and programs for grades 8-12 designed to educate students about proper nutrition and lifelong physical activity, in accordance with State Board of Education curriculum regulations and academic standards.
5. A school environment that supports healthy eating, physical activity, student wellness, and participation in school meal programs.

Implementation, Oversight, and Reporting

The Executive Director or designee shall be responsible for the implementation and oversight of this policy and shall have the authority and responsibility to ensure school compliance with this policy and applicable federal and state requirements.

The Principal or designee shall annually report to the Executive Director or designee regarding implementation and compliance. Staff members responsible for programs related to school wellness shall report regarding the status of such programs.

The Executive Director or designee shall annually report to the Board on the school's compliance with laws and policies related to school wellness. The report may include:

- Assessment of the school environment regarding school wellness issues;
- Evaluation of food service programs;
- Activities and programs conducted to promote nutrition, physical activity, and other student wellness goals;
- Recommendations for policy and/or program revisions;
- Suggestions for improvement in specific areas; and
- Feedback from school staff, students, parents/guardians, community members, and the Wellness Committee.

Triennial Assessment and Public Notification

The Executive Director or designee and the Wellness Committee shall conduct an assessment at least once every three (3) years as part of a continuous improvement process. The triennial assessment shall be made available to the public in an accessible and easily understood manner and shall include:

6. The extent to which the school is in compliance with this policy and applicable wellness requirements;
7. The extent to which this policy compares to model local school wellness policies; and

8. A description of progress made in attaining the goals of this policy.

The school shall update or modify this policy as appropriate based on the results of the triennial assessment; changes in school and community needs or priorities; progress toward wellness goals; emerging health information; and new federal or state laws, regulations, guidance, or standards.

At least annually, the school shall inform the public, including parents/guardians, students, staff, and community members, about the content and implementation of this policy and any updates. Public communication shall include how to access the policy and the most recent triennial assessment, how interested persons may participate in policy development and review, and how to contact the school official responsible for wellness policy leadership.

Recordkeeping

The school shall retain records sufficient to document compliance with federal local school wellness policy requirements, including:

9. The current written Student Wellness Policy;
10. Documentation that the policy and any updates have been made available to the public;
11. The name and title of the school official responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring the policy;
12. Documentation of efforts to review and update the policy, including participants in the process and methods used to inform stakeholders of opportunities to participate;
13. The most recent triennial assessment; and
14. Documentation showing that the most recent triennial assessment was made available to the public.

Wellness Committee

The school shall maintain a Wellness Committee. Participation shall be permitted by the general public and the school community, including, as applicable, parents/guardians, students, representatives of the school food authority, physical education teachers, school health professionals, Board members, school administrators, and members of the public. The school should seek membership that reflects the diversity and needs of the school community.

The Wellness Committee shall serve in an advisory capacity regarding student health and wellness and shall participate in developing, implementing, periodically reviewing, and updating this policy. In establishing and revising wellness goals, the committee shall review and consider evidence-based strategies and techniques related to nutrition education and promotion, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.

Nutrition Education

Nutrition education shall be provided within the sequential, comprehensive health education program in accordance with applicable Pennsylvania curriculum regulations and academic standards for Health, Safety and Physical Education.

- Nutrition education shall teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating and shall reinforce the relationship between nutrition, wellness, readiness to learn, and student achievement.
- All students shall be provided age-appropriate knowledge and skills needed to support healthy lives.
- Nutrition instruction may include behavior-focused skills such as menu planning, reading nutrition labels, evaluating food marketing and media messages, and making informed food choices.
- Nutrition education shall reinforce lifelong balance by linking healthy eating and physical activity.
- Staff responsible for nutrition education shall be appropriately trained and provided relevant professional development.

Nutrition Promotion

The school shall use evidence-based nutrition promotion strategies and consistent nutrition messages to encourage healthy choices and participation in school meal programs.

- Farm to School activities may be implemented where feasible, including school gardens, taste-testing, local agriculture education, field trips, and incorporation of local foods into school meals.
- School staff may cooperate with agencies and community organizations to provide appropriate student projects related to nutrition.

- Food service personnel should use evidence-based strategies to encourage selection and consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, beans, peas, and lentils, and other nutrient-dense foods while reducing food waste.
- The school shall provide families with appropriate health and nutrition resources.

Physical Activity

The school shall strive to provide developmentally appropriate opportunities for physical activity during the school day for all students.

A physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable activity for all students shall be maintained.

Extended periods of student inactivity of two (2) hours or more should be discouraged when practicable.

Physical activity shall not be used or withheld solely as a form of punishment.

Physical Education

A sequential physical education program consistent with applicable Pennsylvania curriculum regulations and Health, Safety and Physical Education academic standards shall be developed and implemented. Students shall participate in physical education as required by law, regulation, and the school's approved program.

- Instruction shall promote lifelong physical activity and provide students with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed for lifelong participation.
- The curriculum shall include varied individual and team activities and shall provide planned instruction sufficient to address applicable academic standards.
- A local assessment system shall be used to monitor student progress on applicable Health, Safety and Physical Education standards.
- Students should be moderately to vigorously active as much as practicable during physical education class.
- Documented medical conditions and disabilities shall be accommodated as required by law.
- Safe and adequate equipment, facilities, and resources shall be provided.
- Physical education shall be taught by appropriately certified personnel, with relevant professional development and student-teacher ratios that support safe and effective instruction.

Other School-Based Wellness Activities

Plain potable drinking water shall be available to students at no cost during meal service and shall be reasonably accessible throughout the school day.

The school shall provide adequate space for eating and serving meals, a clean and safe meal environment, and reasonable time for students to eat.

Students shall have access to hand washing or sanitizing before meals and snacks.

Access to food service operations shall be limited to authorized staff and students.

The school shall utilize available funding and outside programs, when appropriate, to enhance student wellness.

The school shall provide appropriate staff training regarding relevant components of this policy.

Wellness goals shall be considered when planning school-based activities.

School personnel, students, parents/guardians, and community members shall be encouraged to serve as positive wellness role models.

The school shall maintain a healthy school environment that supports learning and minimizes health risks in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

Nutrition Standards for School Meals

Meals offered through the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program shall comply with the nutrition standards and meal patterns in effect under federal law and USDA regulations. Because federal meal standards are periodically revised, the school food authority shall implement new requirements according to the federal implementation schedule.

For the 2026-2027 school year, current federal requirements include the following:

- At least 80 percent of grains offered weekly in the NSLP and SBP must be whole grain-rich, with remaining grain items enriched.
- Product-based added-sugars limits that took effect July 1, 2025 apply to breakfast cereals, yogurt, and flavored milk. Flavored milk may contain no more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces in reimbursable school meals.
- Beginning July 1, 2027, added sugars in both school lunch and school breakfast must average less than 10 percent of total calories across the school week.
- Current sodium limits remain in effect through June 30, 2027. Beginning July 1, 2027, lower federal sodium limits apply. For grades 9-12, the weekly average sodium limit will be less than 1,080 mg per lunch and less than 570 mg per breakfast. Applicable grade-group requirements shall be followed for students in grade 8.
- Plain potable water must be available during meal service.

Fluid Milk - Current Federal Requirements

School Lunch (NSLP). Effective January 14, 2026, the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 permits schools participating in the NSLP to offer whole, reduced-fat (2%), low-fat (1%), and fat-free milk at lunch, including lactose-free/lactose-reduced options, as well as nutritionally equivalent nondairy beverages consistent with federal requirements. At least two milk choices must be offered at lunch daily, and unflavored milk must be available. Flavored milk remains subject to the federal added-sugars limit. Saturated fat from fluid milk may be excluded from the weekly saturated-fat calculation for school lunch; other dietary specifications continue to apply as required by federal law.

School Breakfast (SBP). The Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 applies to the NSLP only. Unless and until federal SBP requirements are amended, milk served at breakfast shall comply with the milk requirements currently applicable to the School Breakfast Program.

Competitive Foods and Beverages - Smart Snacks in School

All foods and beverages sold to students on the school campus during the school day outside the reimbursable school meal programs shall comply with the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, except where a lawful exemption applies. This requirement applies to venues such as vending machines, school stores, snack carts, a la carte sales, and fundraisers conducted during the school day, as applicable.

For purposes of federal competitive-food requirements, 'school day' shall have the meaning established by USDA regulations. The school shall follow any Pennsylvania-approved fundraiser exemptions and other state requirements, when applicable.

Foods and Beverages Provided but Not Sold

The school shall establish and implement standards for foods and beverages provided, but not sold, to students during the school day, including foods provided at celebrations, classroom activities, rewards, or similar events. Shared classroom snacks are not permitted at the school unless specifically authorized by administration in accordance with applicable health, allergy, and wellness requirements.

Food and Beverage Marketing

Food and beverage marketing on the school campus during the school day shall be permitted only for foods and beverages that meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. This requirement applies to marketing on school property and school-controlled materials, equipment, and facilities to the extent required by federal law. The school shall address existing contracts, equipment, scoreboards, vending machines, educational materials, and other marketing arrangements in a manner consistent with federal requirements.

School Nutrition Personnel

School nutrition program personnel shall meet applicable federal hiring and professional standards. Required annual training and continuing education shall be completed and documented in accordance with USDA professional standards and applicable state requirements.

Management of Food Allergies and Special Dietary Needs

The school shall maintain policies and procedures addressing food allergies and special dietary needs in order to:

- 15. Reduce and/or eliminate, to the extent reasonably possible, the likelihood of severe or potentially life-threatening allergic reactions;
- 16. Ensure a rapid and effective response in the event of a severe or potentially life-threatening allergic reaction; and
- 17. Protect students' rights by providing necessary accommodations, when required, so students have an equal opportunity to participate in school programs and activities.

Meal modifications for students with disabilities shall be handled in accordance with applicable federal civil rights and child nutrition requirements. For school lunch fluid-milk substitutions related to a disability, the school shall follow the documentation options permitted under current federal law, including the Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025 and USDA implementing guidance.

Federal Authorities and Regulatory References

- Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, including 42 U.S.C. § 1758b (Local School Wellness Policy requirements).
- Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.
- 7 C.F.R. § 210.31 - Local school wellness policy.
- 7 C.F.R. § 210.10 - National School Lunch Program meal requirements.
- 7 C.F.R. § 220.8 - School Breakfast Program meal requirements.
- 7 C.F.R. § 210.11 - Competitive food service and Smart Snacks standards.
- Whole Milk for Healthy Kids Act of 2025, as implemented for the NSLP beginning January 14, 2026.
- USDA Final Rule, Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (effective July 1, 2024, with phased implementation).

Board Review

The Board shall review and revise this policy as appropriate to maintain compliance with applicable law and to reflect the results of the school's triennial assessment and wellness priorities.

Adopted:	September 2026_____
Revised:	September 2026
Next Triennial Review:	September 2029_____