



Children's Community School

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June 30, 2021

Dear CCS Community Members & Supporters --

Children's Community School is fortunate to be able to support our community's wellness needs in a variety of ways, including providing daily breakfast, lunch, and snacks for all of our students through federal and state school nutrition programs. As a requirement for participation in these programs, Children's Community School is required to establish policies and practices for school wellness in its Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP). A triennial assessment of the LSWP is required, and the pages that follow include further details on CCS's review of our policies and practices.

To begin, I will describe the process through which the triennial assessment is completed. Partnering with the University of Connecticut's Rudd Center of Food Policy & Obesity, the Connecticut State Department of Education provided tools for CCS to assess its written policies (WellSAT 3.0) and implemented practices (WellSAT-I). I completed the WellSAT 3.0 online, and the WellSAT-I was completed through interviews with the CCS Principal, Katherin Sniffin, and our Nutrition Services Director, Carlos Flores. With these two "scorecards" in hand, we examined the strengths and weaknesses of both our written policies and our implemented practices by comparing our scores on each of the assessment tools. The findings are included in this document. Ultimately, we have greatly updated our Local School Wellness Policy, and as the new school year gets underway, we will continue to examine how our implemented practices can best promote health and wellness.

If I were to summarize this experience and what we learned, I would say that it was a valuable process in which we saw that our school is highlighted with strong wellness practices, but our written policies were very weak. As you will see on the following pages, our updated Local School Wellness Policy is far more comprehensive and robust, thanks to what we learned through the triennial assessment process. As an educational institution, we believe that we must always continue to learn, and we believe that this document reflects Children's Community School's deep commitment to that belief.

Sincerely,

Jeff Martin, Executive Director
director@ccswaterbury.org



Local School Wellness Policy

Updated Spring 2021

Effective July 1, 2021

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Children's Community School Wellness Policy

Children's Community School believes that children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive. We believe good health fosters student attendance and education. CCS takes seriously its obligations to help address the childhood obesity epidemic, and we recognize that healthy eating and physical activity habits begin in childhood, helping our young people to avoid a life that is troubled by risk factors that can lead to fatal conditions such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes. We recognize that many factors contribute to young people choosing foods that lack nutritional value and/or choosing a lifestyle that does not include sufficient physical activity. Children's Community School 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 of Children's Community School that:

- The School will engage students, families, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing the school's nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages served through the School's breakfast, lunch, and snack programs will meet the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of 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.
- The 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.

Policy Goals

I. School Health Councils

Children's Community School will create, strengthen, and maintain a School Health Council to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The School Health Council will consist of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and at minimum, will include one parent/guardian, two students, one member of the School's nutrition staff, a school administrator, one teacher, and a health professional.

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Served on Campus

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs 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;
- make water available to all students during meals;
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (as defined by USDA); and
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.

CCS will engage students and parents/guardians, through a variety of methods, in selecting foods to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. In addition, the School will make available, upon written request, information about the nutritional content of meals.

To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn:

- CCS will operate the School Breakfast Program.
- CCS will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation.
- CCS will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- CCS will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, and other means.

Meal Pricing

Children's Community School operates under the Community Eligibility Provision, meaning that all students qualify for free breakfast, lunch, and snack. For students in the Pre-Kindergarten program, as well as those attending Summer Bridges, all meals and snacks will be provided during summer months when school/programs are in session.

Meal Times & Scheduling

When considering meal times and scheduling, CCS is committed to:

- providing students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- scheduling meal periods at appropriate times;
- not scheduling tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- when possible, scheduling lunch periods to follow recess periods for students in elementary grades
- providing students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- taking reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs.

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff

Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school nutrition programs. As part of the School's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals at CCS, according to their level of responsibility.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages

All members of the School community are prohibited 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

To promote the healthiest possible nutrition for all members of our community, and because our School provides access to free breakfast, lunch and snacks, Children's Community School strictly prohibits the sale of any food or beverages during school hours, including Before Care and after school programs.

Fundraising Activities

To support our student's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities will not involve food or will make every effort to use only foods that meet the nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages, according to applicable state and/or federal guidelines. In the event that a fundraising activity includes foods that do not meet these standards, notice to this fact will be given to all students and parents/guardians. CCS will make every effort to encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity.

Snacks

Snacks served during the school day or in after-school 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. The

School will assess when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations.

Rewards

CCS will minimize its use of foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet state and/or federal nutrition standards for foods and beverages, as rewards for academic performance or good behavior. In the event that a reward does include a food or beverage that does not meet the aforementioned standards, notice to this fact will be given to all students and parents/guardians. Similarly, Children's Community School will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

Celebrations & School-Sponsored Events

Children's Community School will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Each party will include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet state and/or federal nutrition standards. CCS does not permit any outside food provided by parents/guardians. The same standards apply to School-sponsored events such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances.

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion

Children's Community School aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. As such, the School will make every effort to 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 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 playing video games and/or 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

Children’s Community School will support parents/guardians’ efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. From time to time, the School will offer healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. In addition, the CCS will provide opportunities for parents/guardians to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

CCS will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents/guardians’ 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

As a general rule, Children’s Community School does not promote any particular products, brands, and/or companies. Marketing and/or promotion of food or beverage products at the School, or in any aspect of school operations, must meet relevant state and/or federal nutrition guidelines.

Staff Wellness

Children’s Community School highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Annually, the School Health Council will formally seek input from members of the School staff related to policies and practices affecting staff wellness. The School Health Council will make recommendations to the School Administration regarding matters of staff wellness.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Regular Physical Education (P.E.)

All students, including students with disabilities and/or special health-care needs, will receive regular physical education for the entire school year. All physical education will be taught by a qualified teacher. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Daily Recess

All students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which moderate to vigorous physical activity is encouraged verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

The School will make every effort to avoid 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 indoors for long periods of time, CCS will give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School

When available, CCS will provide information to students about families about physical activity clubs or intramural programs, including opportunities for interscholastic sports programs.

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

When safe and practical, Children's Community School encourages students and families to consider walking or riding a bicycle to school. Working with appropriate parties in the City of Waterbury, CCS will help to identify needed improvements to make it safer and easier for students to walk and bike to school.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring

The Executive Director, or her/his designee, will ensure compliance with established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies.

School food service staff will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the Executive Director. CCS will comply with all required practices for ensuring compliance and best practices related to school nutrition policies and procedures. Similarly, the School will complete a triennial assessment of its School Wellness Policy. The School Health Council will play an active role in completing any and all necessary Results of assessments will be made available through the School website.



Local School Wellness Triennial Assessment

Prior to updating Children's Community School's Local School Wellness Policy (see pages 2-10 above), CCS completed the WellSAT 3.0 to assess the previous LSWP. The results of the WellSAT 3.0 can be accessed via this [link](#).

To assess practice implementation at CCS, interviews were conducted with CCS Principal, Katherin Sniffin, and Nutrition Program Director, Carlos Flores; those interviews were scored using the WellSAT-I tool. This scorecard is accessible via this [link](#).

As a culminating activity in the Triennial Assessment, Children's Community School was challenged to identify connections between policy and practice. Based on comparing the scores between WellSAT 3.0 and WellSAT-I, CCS was challenged to identify specific items in these four categories:

- Strong Policies & Aligned Practices
- Create Practice Implementation Plan
- Update Policies
- Opportunities for Growth

You can find the full version of "Worksheet 3" via this [link](#). In accordance with the USDA's LSWP requirements for public notification, Children's Community School must share the results of the Strong Policies & Aligned Practices section, as well as the Create Practice Implementation Plan section. CCS is also required to report any federal requirements that are identified in the Update Policies and Opportunities for Growth sections. The following narratives summarize the required reports:

Strong Policies & Aligned Practices

As noted in the introductory letter, CCS is very pleased with the implementation of strong practices in our school nutrition programs. Until this point, our written policies have not matched the strength of our practices. As such, there were no items identified in Section 1. In our next triennial assessment, we anticipate this to be our strongest area.

Create Practice Implementation Plan

CCS can improve its overall connection between policy and practice by further examining ways of increasing students' physical activity time. Competing demands and limited time each day pose difficult challenges for meeting suggested time amounts for physical activity. The Principal is exploring ways to increase this, and the

school as a whole is looking for ways to increase physical activity time for all of our students, including before, during, and after school.

Update Policies

As noted, this is probably the area where we have the most room to improve, and we believe that the updated Local School Wellness Policy addresses the deficiencies found in our previous policy. The new policy makes clear the school's commitment to intentional nutrition education across disciplines and at all grade levels. Policies have been updated to fully address compliance with USDA standards for all school nutrition programs; again, our practices in this area are very strong, and now our policies are too. CCS continues to limit opportunities for competitive foods to exist in our school environment, and our policies have been updated to justify our approach and help students and families make healthy choices. Similarly, our policies around Wellness Promotion & Marketing have been updated to provide clarity regarding our stance and obligations, and to provide guidance for all in our school community. The establishment of the School Wellness Committee will help us to properly navigate the ongoing implementation and assessment processes.

Opportunities for Growth

As a learning institution, we believe in lifelong learning, and we are committed to growing as an institution, just as we expect our students to commit themselves to growth as individuals. We can strengthen our policies and practices surrounding nutrition education, and the Principal and School Wellness Committee will examine this as a top priority. We can improve on utilizing local foods when possible. We definitely have opportunities for growth in physical education and physical activity; with support from partner organizations and grant funders, we are exploring ways to increase physical education, while also introducing more physical activity before, during, and after school, including interscholastic sports. With guidance from the newly revised Local School Wellness Policy, our ability to implement, evaluate, and communicate matters of school nutrition and wellness are poised to show drastic improvements.