



## **Torchlight Academy Local Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition**

### **I. School Health Councils**

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

### **II. Guidelines for Food and Beverages available on School 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;
- Serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- Ensure that at least half of the served grains are whole grain.

Torchlight Academy should 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, Torchlight Academy should share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus, a website, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials.

**Breakfast.** 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:

- Torchlight Academy will, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program.
- Torchlight Academy will, to the extent possible, arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving breakfast in the classroom, “grab-and-go” breakfast, or breakfast during morning break or recess.
- Torchlight Academy will serve breakfast to students.
- Torchlight Academy will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take-home materials, or other means.

**Free and Reduced-priced Meals.** Torchlight Academy 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, Torchlight Academy may utilize electronic identification and payment systems; provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals, such as “grab and-go” or classroom breakfast.

**Meal Times and Scheduling.** Torchlight Academy:

- Will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- Should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, *e.g.*, lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- Should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- Will schedule lunch periods as much as possible to follow recess periods
- Will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- Should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (*e.g.*, orthodontia or high tooth decay risk).

**Qualifications of School Food Service Staff** Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of Torchlight Academy's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in Torchlight Academy. Staff development programs should 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.** Torchlight Academy should 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.

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

**Celebrations.** Are discouraged at Torchlight Academy. However, in the event of a celebration, Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above). The school will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

### **III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing**

**Nutrition Education and Promotion** Torchlight Academy aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Torchlight Academy should 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** Torchlight Academy will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The Torchlight Academy will offer healthy eating seminars for parents, send home nutrition information, post nutrition tips on school websites, and provide nutrient analyses of school menus. Torchlight Academy should 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. In addition, the Torchlight Academy will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

**Staff Wellness.** Torchlight Academy 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. Torchlight Academy should establish and maintain a staff wellness committee composed of at least one staff member, school health council member, local hospital representative, dietitian or other health professional, recreation program representative, union representative, and employee benefits specialist. (The staff wellness committee could be a subcommittee of the school health council.) The committee should develop, promote, and oversee a multifaceted plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan should be based on input solicited from school staff and should outline ways to encourage

healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff. The staff wellness committee should distribute its plan to the school health council annually.

#### **IV. Physical Activity**

**Daily Physical Education (P.E.) K-12.** All students in grades K-5, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive daily physical education. A certified physical education teacher will teach all physical education.

**Daily Recess.** All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, if weather permitted, during which Torchlight Academy should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Torchlight Academy should 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 indoors for long periods of time, Torchlight Academy 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.

## V. Monitoring and Policy Review

**Monitoring** The superintendent or designee will ensure compliance with established school-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. The principal or designee will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to Torchlight Academy superintendent or designee.

**Policy Review.** To help with the initial development of the school's wellness policies, each school in the school will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies.<sup>1</sup> The results of those school-by-school assessments will be compiled at the school level to identify and prioritize needs.

Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, Torchlight Academy will review our nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The school, and individual Torchlight Academy within the school, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

This Local Wellness Policy is hereby approved:

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Torchlight Academy Authorized Administration Official**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Torchlight Academy Board Chair**

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