

Sisters Academy of Baltimore

Wellness Policy 2021

Rationale

Sisters Academy recognizes the important connection between student health and wellness and the student's ability to learn and achieve high standards related to both academics and behavior.

Sisters Academy recognizes its role and responsibility to educate, model, and practice healthy choices in physical activity and good nutrition for its students and their families.

The goal of Sisters Academy is that our graduates will be "well-educated, self-assured, spiritual and committed young women who are so needed in our community, our nation, and our world. They will be leaders who make a difference." In order to achieve this goal, students at Sisters Academy receive "an integrated, quality education that addresses their intellectual, spiritual, and physical growth and development, leading to acceptance into quality high schools, which will be followed by enlightened life choices." (*Sisters Academy of Baltimore, Statement of Purpose*)

Section 1: Nutrition Education

Education

The aim of nutrition education is to help students adopt healthy eating behaviors. Nutrition education occurs in the classroom as well as in the larger school community.

All students take two classes weekly entitled "Life Skills" and "Care of Self and Others (CSO)." The classes are scheduled for two 30-45 minute sessions per week for each of the four grades and are taught for the duration of the school year by qualified teaching and counseling professionals with prior experience at the middle school level. In these courses, students study psycho-social issues such as peer relationships, health, nutrition, anger management, conflict resolution, familial problems, and sexuality. Health and nutrition education is part of the curriculum at each of the four grade levels and is integrated into other areas of the curriculum, such as science and physical education. In addition, nutrition education is an integral component of the school breakfast and lunch program as students make selections of fruits and vegetables, whole grain products, and low-fat products to eat. Students also learn about healthy food preparation methods.

Training

All food service personnel receive pre-service training in food service operations.

2021-22 Nutrition Education Goals

- Supplement the existing PE curriculum to include cardiovascular health and other PE-related topics
- Introduce a separate health class to complement the existing rich offerings of the Life Skills and CSO learning components; each trimester will target a specific area related to wellness - health, nutrition, and sexuality
- Include a curriculum component in science, math, and/or health that focuses on reading/evaluating nutrition labels

Section 2: Guidelines and Standards - School Meal Program

Free and Reduced Lunch Eligibility

In an average year, approximately 90% of SAB students qualify for free or reduced meals (breakfast, lunch, and snack), but Sisters Academy has opted to provide all meals free of charge to 100% of our students. All families complete an annual MSDE income survey which determines free and reduced lunch eligibility.

Food Distribution Company

All meals are provided through the school's food service contractor, Revolution Foods, which complies with the National School Lunch and/or Breakfast standards for meal patterns, nutrient levels, and calorie requirements as specified by USDA nutrition standards. Revolution Foods meets the qualifications to be a certified B company which means the company voluntarily meets high standards of transparency, accountability, and performance. In 2021, Revolution Foods was named for the third time to Fast Company's Annual List of the World's Most Innovative Companies as a leading provider of healthy community and school meals.

Revolution Foods supports an *eating clean* mission by ensuring that foods served include:

- Dairy products that are rBST free
- Whole grains (from brown rice to whole-grain rich unbleached flour)
- USDA high-grade quality meat (never mechanically separated)
- Local vegetable options by region
- Fresh whole fruit (with seasonal highlights)

During the 2020-2021 school year, all students participated in the Revolution Foods program; students were not permitted to bring any food items or drinks other than water from home.

After obtaining their food selections, students are provided with 20-30 minutes each day to sit and leisurely enjoy their breakfast and lunch. All students have access to free drinking water through touchless hydration stations located throughout the building to ensure students and staff can remain hydrated with filtered water.

Food Outside the Cafeteria

All school-based activities will be consistent with the school's wellness policy goals; thus, food served outside the cafeteria will meet the same nutritional standards as the school meals.

- Foods are not used as a behavior management technique by offering it as a reward or withholding it as a punishment.
- The staff is encouraged to model healthy eating by offering healthy choices at meetings and lunch.
- Food and beverages provided at school events and celebrations will meet high nutritional standards and include healthy food choices.
- Soda, other sweet drinks, and candy are not allowed at Sisters Academy.

2021-2022 Guidelines and Standards Goals

- Seek the expertise of the staff from our vendor, Revolution Foods, to educate students about healthy eating and food preparation
- Ensure the adequate number of hours for training food service personnel
- Change our cafeteria environment into a 'dining room' to encourage a calm and peaceful eating experience for our students
- Collaborate with a farm-to-school program to coordinate a gardening and cooking club

Section 3: Programs to Promote Wellness

Physical Education

The aim of **physical education** is to help students develop a physically active lifestyle. Physical education develops physical competence, physical fitness, personal responsibility, and the enjoyment of physical activity so students can be physically active throughout their lifetimes.

Unless otherwise exempted for injury, no substitutions exist for the physical education requirement. All students participate in a structured physical education program throughout the school year. This program is aligned with the standards of the State of Maryland. Each student has physical education for two 45-minute periods per week. In addition, students have a recess period of 20-30 minutes each day and have opportunities to develop their skills in after-school team sports and sports-related clubs. Students also have opportunities to participate in other after-school movement activities such as dance and yoga.

Social-Emotional Well-Being

SAB has a full-time guidance counselor on staff who meets with the girls weekly in their CSO class, in targeted small group sessions, and on an individual basis as needed. Students and faculty receive training in areas that include but are not limited to suicide prevention and wellness issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Outward Bound - Knott Foundation Collaboration

During the summer and fall of 2020, Sisters Academy students in Grades 6, 7, and 8 participated in Outward Bound programs. The summer programs were one week in length for 2 hours per day. The autumn program consisted of a 10 week curriculum aligned with the school's CSO program. Typically, Outward Bound instructors plan a curriculum based on a wilderness expedition theme, but in the virtual environment, the program directors saw the opportunity to present a program designed to reinforce and enhance foundational skills related to healthy living, resilience, confidence, and intentionality with regard to school and family relationships and responsibilities. Both programs were centered on developing strong connections (student to student, and teacher to student) in order to facilitate increased understanding and productive problem solving within the school environment. SAB plans to continue to collaborate with Outward Bound throughout the 2021-2022 school year.

Other School-Based Activities

Other school-based activities include an outdoor educational program, summer sports camp, cooking, and a return post-COVID to field trips including but not limited to hospitals, senior residences, and local farms. The aim of these special activities is to broaden the students' experiences related to health and wellness. For instance, our students participate in a one-week sports camp in the summer and experience swimming and a variety of other sports, such as badminton, tennis, field hockey, volleyball, and basketball.

2021-22 Programs to Promote Wellness Goals

- Create a yearly theme related to wellness that is a focus throughout the year in morning gatherings, assemblies, classes, and potentially a "Wellness Day"
- Encourage the incorporation of health and wellness topics into other areas of the curriculum; i.e. language arts (utilizing non-fiction selections on health and wellness) and religion (God calls us to tend to our individual health and well-being)
- Call on the nurse to include weekly health tips, meals, and suggestions in the "Weekly Wrap" and establish faculty health incentive programs and activities
- Attend field trips to sites such as Genesee Valley Outdoor Learning Center
- Create the opportunity for before school physical activities and more after school physical activities
- Reimplement hearing and vision check-ups for each student

Section 4: Ongoing Health and Wellness Enhancements in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic **Adjunct Faculty**

A Health Suite has been designated to a full-time nurse who is on campus daily for COVID check-ins and who follows up with families on such issues as immunizations, causes for absences, and health-related issues that arise during the school day.

SAB has also added a full-time custodian to the staff who ensures the cleanliness and welcoming appearance of the school, in particular bathrooms, classrooms, and lunch room are cleaned and maintained to COVID-19 standards.

COVID-19 Recovery and Reopening Plan 2020-2021 (*document attached*)

The Sisters Academy Recovery and Reopening Plan details a variety of risk mitigation methods that have been established to prepare for the return to on-campus, in-person learning which includes but is not limited to daily on-campus health screenings for all students, staff, and visitors and hand-washing and hygiene training.

The Recovery and Reopening Plan was developed with guidance and resources from local, state, and national officials including government and healthcare professionals, counselors, educators, school leaders, and experts in various applicable fields. Critical feedback provided from questionnaires completed by parents/guardians and faculty/staff also significantly informed the final version of the plan which stresses a balanced consideration of both the educational risks and the health risks that we have faced as a community of teachers and learners during the COVID-19 health crisis.

Updated Facilities

- Modified classroom and dining area layouts to address social distancing recommendations
- School signage related to health and safety protocols
- Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols using EPA-approved products, to include sanitizing common areas between meals and classes
- Health suite and isolation area
- In May, 2021, the outside recess area will be equipped with socially distanced play areas for Four Square, Kickball, and Hopscotch

Equipment Modifications

- Touchless hydration stations located throughout the building to ensure students and staff can remain hydrated with filtered water
- Personal protective equipment including mask, gloves, and plexiglass protective barriers
- Automatic hand soap and paper towel dispensers
- Hand sanitizing stations placed around the building

Section 5: Communication and Program Review

Accountability

The Principal is charged with the responsibility to ensure that the Wellness Policy is implemented yearly. The Principal will collaborate with and seek input from the Health and Safety Team (including the Administrative Assistant, the Life Skills and Physical Education teachers, Guidance Counselor, and Nurse) to assess the policy and its effectiveness.

This draft of SAB's Wellness Policy has been revised and updated by the school Principal and Administrative Assistant.

Stakeholder Communication

Sisters Academy seeks to inform, educate, and communicate with school stakeholders about health and wellness policies on a regular basis. Means of communication include but are not limited to the "Weekly Wrap" family newsletter, quarterly reports, and sponsor and alumni publications. The school website and social media formats that are in use include the Sisters Academy website and Facebook and Instagram pages. Policies are published in faculty and family handbooks which are available to all stakeholders.

2021-22 Communication and Program Review Goals


- Continue to refine the Wellness Policy during the 2021-2022 school year with the goal to establish a working committee strictly focused on wellness and overall health
- Strive to increase participation among stakeholders including faculty members, student body, parent community, alumni membership, and Board of Directors
- Share our Wellness Plan with stakeholders mentioned above

- Invite community members in wellness-related professions (such as nutritionists, doctors, nurses, physical therapists, self-defense instructors) to conduct workshops and activities with our students and faculty
- Complete an annual survey of students and staff and share results with them on our website
- Increase building signage and visual reminders throughout the school which promote wellness, health, and proper nutrition

Date of Revision: May 3, 2021

Revised by:

Principal, Jeanne Dolamore

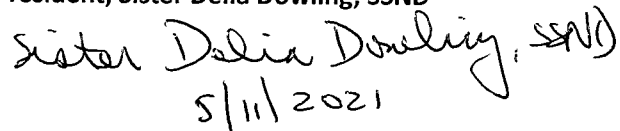
 5/11/2021

Teacher Representative, Elizabeth Nash

 5/11/2021

Approved by:

President, Sister Delia Dowling, SSND


5/11/2021