

Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition
(Updated & Approved by the Board of Education on (June 10, 2025)
This Policy is also available in the Parent-Student Handbook)

The Wellness Policy of St. Paul Lutheran School (SPLS) in partnership with Guardian Angels Central Catholic (GACC) School is updated and approved on June 10, 2025 by St. Paul Lutheran School, Board of Education. The Wellness Policy includes and follows the guidelines of the Nebraska Department of Education's National School Lunch Program. Daily the students, at GACC, are offered the variety of fruits and vegetables as required by the program. The serving sizes recommended by the program also meets the guidelines. A copy of the guidelines is available for viewing any time at GACC, stored in the office next to the kitchen.

Preamble

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, 33% of high school students do not participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and 72% of high school students do not attend daily physical education classes;

Whereas, only 2% of children (2 to 19 years of age) 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, schools 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, it is the goal of the St. Paul Lutheran School (SPLS) Wellness Policy, in partnership with Guardian Angels Central Catholic (GACC) School (who also follows the guidelines and updates from the Nebraska Department of Education National School Lunch Program), to be committed to providing a school environment that will promote healthy lifestyles in school and protect our student's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.

Therefore, it is the policy of St. Paul Lutheran School that:

- SPLS students have full access to free filtered drinking water at all times during the school day.
- SPLS students have full access to free drinking water at all times during mealtime at GACC.
- SPLS and GACC will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing nutrition and physical activity policies.

- All students in grades Pre-8 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, SPLS and GACC will participate in available federal school meal programs including the National School Lunch Program and Special Milk Program.
- SPLS and GACC 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.
- SPLS and GACC do not offer breakfast. Vegetables and a fruit bar are offered at mealtime at GACC at every lunch period. There is no charge for seconds at the vegetable and fruit bar.

Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

Meals served through the National School Lunch Program and served at GACC 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; GACC will share information, upon request, about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students.

Free and Reduced-Priced Meals

SPLS and GACC 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.

Applications for Free and Reduced-Price school meals are available to all families at any time both online at stpaulwp.org on the “Registration & Parent Information” page under the “School Lunch Program Served at GACC” section or in the school office.

Students with Unpaid Meal Balances

SPLS will not withhold lunches from any student for any reason such as an unpaid meal balance. Every effort will be made to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who have unpaid meal balances. Parents will be required to apply for Free and Reduced lunch prices.

Meal times and Scheduling GACC & SPLS:

- Will provide students with at least 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- Will schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- Will not schedule tutoring, club or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities.
- 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 tooth decay risk)

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff

Qualified nutrition professionals, at GACC, will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school’s responsibility to operate a food service program, continuing professional development for the

Food Service Manager annual training is provided for both SPLS & GACC in accordance with USDA Professional Standards.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages

Schools 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.

Foods and Beverages Sold Individually

SPLS & GACC does not provide foods & beverages sold Individually (i.e., foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria a la carte lines, fundraisers, school stores, etc.) during lunch mealtime.

Snacks & Treats

Snacks

Students may bring snacks for breaks. Chewing gum and hard candy is discouraged in school. Any person in authority has final authority on the permissibility of these items. Candy and pop are discouraged. The goal of snacks served during the school day is to 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. SPLS and GACC will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of other school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages and other considerations.

Treats

Students may bring birthday treats if they so desire. It is encouraged to bring healthy treats. Parents/guardians are encouraged to discuss the treats with the child's teacher in advance of bringing them in. This is to ensure that any treat brought is safe for all students. In some cases of peanut allergies, a classroom or the school may be a "Peanut Free Zone". Parents/ guardians may also choose to purchase a book or other needed items in place of birthday treats.

Rewards

SPLS and GACC will not use foods or beverages, especially those 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 punishment.

School-Sponsored Events (such as, but not limited to, athletic events, dances, or performances)

Foods and beverages offered or sold at school-sponsored events outside the school day will meet standard for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually.

Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing Nutrition Education and Promotion

SPLS and GACC aim to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. SPLS and GACC 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 breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education for SPLS

Daily Physical Education (P.E.) K-8

All students in grades K-6, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and alternative educational settings, will receive physical education at least 75 minutes/week for elementary school students for the entire school year. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Daily Recess

All elementary school students will have at the least 30 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Extended periods (i.e., periods of two or more hours) of inactivity is discouraged. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing or activities which make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, students will be given periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Communications With Parents

SPLS and GACC will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. SPLS at GACC will have nutrition information available and provide nutrient analyses of school menus when requested.

SPLS and GACC 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.

SPLS and GACC 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 support will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home material, special events, or physical education homework.

Food Marketing in Schools

School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, SPLS and GACC 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. GACC has posters hung in the lunchroom promoting healthy choices. They are replaced as new ones are made available.

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. Examples of marketing techniques include the following: logos and brand names on/in vending machines, books or curricula, textbook covers, school supplies, other printed or electronic educational materials, signs, scoreboards, school structures, and sports equipment, beverage cups & containers, coolers, trash containers; educational incentive programs that provide food as a reward; programs that provide schools with supplies when families buy low-nutrition food products; in-school publications and media such as in school television, such as Channel One, computer screen savers, school announcements; free samples or coupons; and food sales through fundraising activities.

Staff Wellness

St. Paul Lutheran School and Guardian Angels Central Catholic School highly value 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. The school encourages healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff.

Fundraising

All fundraising must be approved by the administration, whether they are edible or non-edible items.

Wellness Policy Monitoring, Updating, Review & Assessment

Wellness Policy Monitoring

The administrator or a designee will ensure compliance with established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. The principal will ensure compliance with those policies and will report on the school's compliance to the Board of Education.

The Food Service Manager will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the school principal. In addition, SPLS and GACC will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. If SPLS and GACC have not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, SPLS and GACC will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible.

Wellness Policy Updating & Review

The updates and revisions to SPLS's & GACC's policies are made before each school year; any changes are implemented at the beginning of each school year whenever possible but can be updated at any time deemed necessary to inform the public of changes.

When updating the policy, the public can view the meal patterns, rules for vending, the nutritional information on snacks served and list of approved snacks for the smart snack list all available at GACC.

Wellness Policy Assessment

The Wellness Policy will be reviewed at least every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, SPLS and GACC 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. SPLS and GACC will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

The Wellness Policy on Physical Activity and Nutrition is provided to all families at the beginning of the school year by being sent home in the first Family Folder. It is also available for viewing at any time in the school office or online at stpaulwp.org under the "School Wellness Tab" or on the "Registration & Parent Information" page under the "School Lunch Program Served at GACC" section or in the 2025-2026 Parent-Student Handbook (both online or in print form.) Any new information and/or updates will be sent home to each family when additional family envelopes are sent home. The Family Folders are sent home every Thursday and require a parent's signature on the envelopes when they are returned to the school.

The Wellness Policy will continue to be revised as needed or as any changes are made to improve the wellness and activity of the students.

The St. Paul Lutheran School Wellness Policy (August 2016)
Reviewed 5/30/2025
Updated, Revised & Adopted (June 10, 2025)