

WELLNESS POLICY

Our Mission

“To teach as Jesus did” inspiring all to become their best spiritually, behaviorally, and academically.

Our Core Values

- Challenging students to ensure their learning needs are met through high and achievable expectations.
- Creating an awareness of our social responsibility to others and respond to God’s call to serve.
- Cultivating an appreciation and respect for all in a family centered community.
- Growing in our appreciation of our Catholic identity through formation of the mind, body, and spirit.
- Developing self-disciplined learners to be aware of their dignity and potential.

Therefore, it is the policy of St. Patrick’s School that:

- The school will engage students, parents, staff, and community members in developing and monitoring policies in nutrition, education, physical activity, and mental health.
- Students in grades kindergarten through 8 will have opportunities and encouragement to be physically active regularly.
- The school counselor will provide and partner with additional mental health resources, to provide students, parents, and staff opportunities to develop social/emotional skills.
- Qualified nutrition staff will provide students and staff access to a variety of nutritious, affordable, and appealing foods that meet their nutritional and when possible, health needs.
- Foods and beverages sold or served will meet the nutrition recommendations of the US Dietary Guidelines of America.

Wellness Committee

- St. Patrick’s Catholic School will develop and monitor school nutrition, physical, and mental health education policies, and the committee will serve as a resource for implementing the policies.
- The Wellness Committee will have members from the school community who represent students, parents, School Advisory Board, administration, food service personnel, the school nurse, physical education instructor, and school counselor.
- The committee will meet once per quarter to set and monitor wellness goals
- The committee will update the school on the wellness goals and progress.

Nutrition Standards

Nutrition Education

The primary goal of nutrition education is to influence students’ eating habits and encourage healthy living. Students in grades K-8 will receive nutritional education as part of the school curriculum. Throughout the school year, lessons include topics such as agriculture and farming, keeping your body healthy, and drug and tobacco education programs. Nutrition educational activities will stress the

appealing aspects of healthy eating and be participatory, developmentally appropriate, and enjoyable. Cafeteria bulletin board displays will promote healthy living. School staff will model and reinforce positive eating habits. The school menu will be posted monthly on the school website.

Nutritional qualities of food and beverages sold and served on campus

Meals served through the national school lunch program will meet nutrition requirements established by local, state and federal statutes and regulations. Good menu planning will be used to offer healthy foods. Choices will include lean meats, a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and low-fat or fat-free milk products. The school only provides nut safe options. All students have access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.

Availability of Water

The kitchen staff provides two water cooler stations with disposable cups daily. There are water bottle filling stations and drinking fountains located throughout the building for students to access throughout the school day.

Time allotted for Student Meals

School meal periods are between 10:50 A.M. and 12:40 P.M. School activities will not be scheduled during mealtimes unless students may eat during such activities. Lunches are served during multiple 22-25-minute-long lunch periods on normal school days. The average serving time is 5-6 minutes allowing 17-20 minutes for students to eat lunch.

Free and reduced meals

St. Patrick's School will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to and prevent the identification of students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. All students, regardless of payment, are given a 4-digit lunch code to use at registers eliminating cash or identification of payment status. Students' unpaid meal balances will be kept private. Parents will be notified by email or phone call of negative balances.

Applications for free/reduced price meals are sent home to all families in a newsletter before the start of the school year. Applications are also in the office and links can be found in electronic school communications.

A la carte items

A la carte items are offered in compliance with the USDA regulations prohibiting the sale of foods of minimal nutritional value* and meet the Smart Snack school guidelines during meal periods.

***Minimal nutritional value foods:** sodas, energy drinks, chewing gum, candy, high calorie potato chips, and non-whole grain-rich cakes, cookies, brownies, and desserts.

Student meals from home

Parents and students will be encouraged through promotional materials in the cafeteria and the school website to make healthy food choices for student lunches from home. The school discourages students from sharing their foods and/or beverages with one another during meal or snack times given concerns about allergies and other restrictions in some children's diets.

Competitive beverages

Beverages available to students include 100% fruit or vegetable juices with no added sugars, bottled water, low fat or skim milk, and zero-calorie sports drinks and flavored waters. No beverages containing high sugar and calorie content will be sold during the school day.

Competitive foods

No food in competition with the school lunch or breakfast program will be sold or otherwise made available to students for sale anywhere on the school premises starting prior to until after the school day has ended (this includes foods brought in from area restaurants.)

Vending & Food Sales

The sale of foods of minimal nutritional value which do not meet smart snack regulations are not allowed on school property in areas accessible to students until after the end of the school day.

Fundraising

To support children's health and school nutrition education efforts, school fundraising activities that take place during the school day will not involve food or will use only food that meet nutrition and portion size guidelines for food and beverages sold individually according to the smart snack criteria. The school will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity.

Snacks and Smart Snack Guidelines

Snacks served during the school day in the classrooms will make a positive contribution to children's diet and health needs. St. Patrick School will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, students' nutritional needs, students ages and other considerations. Faculty and staff are expected to follow these guidelines in school.

Rewards

St. Patrick's School will discourage the use of food or beverages for academic performance or good behavior and will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment.

Celebrations

The school will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day. When snacks are used for classroom or religious celebrations, they should be considered healthy, therefore promoting student well-being. All celebrations involving food should be approved by the administration with knowledge of the wellness policies.

Family and community

Family members and community members are encouraged to become actively involved in programs that provide physical activity and nutrition education such as St. Pat's athletic program, and Shamrock Stride. Parents are also invited to join students for school meals in the cafeteria (see policy on competitive foods).

Physical Education and Activity

St. Patrick's School students in grades K-8 participate in physical education classes for 60 to 80 minutes per week for the entire school year. The curriculum for each grade is aligned with national or state physical education standards. A certified physical education teacher will teach all physical education classes.

Physical activity is designed to promote student wellness and will be directed but not limited to the following curricular goals:

- Physical activity and exercise are beneficial for physical health, recreation, social skills, teamwork, and mental health.
- Activities should provide students with the knowledge to participate in physical activities throughout their lifetime.
- Participation in physical activities should be age appropriate.
- Students will spend at least 50% of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous activity.
- Physical activity within the physical education classes will provide alternatives to students with handicaps or injuries.

Recess

All grades PreK through 2 will have two 20-minute recesses daily. Grades 3- 5 will have at least one 20-minute supervised recess daily. Students in grades 6-8 will have at least one 20-minute recess per week. Students are encouraged to participate in moderate to vigorous physical activity during recess.

Walking Club

St. Patrick's students in grades K-8 will walk around the campus when dropped off in the mornings from 7:30 A.M. - 7:50 A.M. or inside during inclement weather.

Emotional Wellbeing

St. Patrick School will support students and staff in their social, emotional, and mental wellness.

Activities and support may include:

- Weekly guidance lessons provided by the school counselor in grades preschool through 6. Students in grades 7 and 8 will cover guidance lessons in conjunction with advisory lessons.

- PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) and SEL (Social Emotional Learning) lessons are provided to the teachers to incorporate into their classroom curriculum weekly.
- Retreats, community speakers, and evening parent events that focus on emotional wellbeing will be scheduled throughout the school year.

Spiritual Wellness

St. Patrick's School will support the students and staff in their spiritual growth.

Activities and support may include:

- Weekly Mass for all students and staff
- Religion education aligned to the Archdiocese of Omaha standards.
- Classroom visits with a priest monthly.
- Community faith activities throughout the year to include; sacrament preparation and retreats, monthly Adoration, reconciliation, and other celebrations of the Catholic faith.