

Acorn Montessori Charter Schools: Local Wellness Policy

Date Created: 9/2016

Last Updated: 2/2022

I. Wellness Policy Goals

Goal for Nutrition Promotion: Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and learning centers. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff, teachers, parents, students, and the community.

Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur by:

- The use signage and menus to highlight special items at student's eye level.
- Planning theme weeks and highlight different foods according to the theme.
- Ask teaching and administrative staff members to announce the menu items available for the day.
- Train service staff to gently prompt students to select and eat target menu items and balanced meals.
- Provide a Vegetable and Fruit cart twice per week to introduce students to new produce foods and encourage healthy eating.
- Ensure eating areas are clean, orderly, and inviting.
- Train kitchen staff on the proper use of utensils and correct portioning.
- Feature student artwork and signage to promote healthy eating.
- Ensure all foods and beverages promoted to students, meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School Nutrition Standards.
- Practice additional promotion techniques available at www.healthiergeneration.org and www.smarterlunchrooms.org

Goal for Nutrition Education: Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by all students. Acorn Montessori Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is 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 integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects.
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally-relevant, and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits, and school gardens.

- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods.
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise).
- Links with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods and nutrition-related community services.
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing.
- Includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.

Goal for Physical Activity: Children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive school physical activity program (CSPAP). A CSPAP has 5 main components: high quality physical education, physical activity during the day, physical activity before and after school, staff involvement, and family and community engagement. Schools will ensure that these varied physical activity opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education.

Physical activity during the school day such as recess, classroom physical activity breaks, physical education, and other physical activity exercises, **will not** be withheld as punishment for any reason. Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will provide teachers and school staff with alternative ways to correct behaviors without limiting available physical activity during the school day. This does not include participation on sports teams that have specific academic requirements.

To the extent practicable, Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe, and that equipment is available for students to be active. Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will conduct necessary inspections of school playground equipment and will repair or replace where necessary.

Goal for Other School-Based Activities that Promote Student Wellness: Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting; including school meals, food and beverage fundraisers and other venues, as well as physical activity facilities. Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition, and other wellness components, so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development, and strong educational outcomes.

Classrooms are encouraged to coordinate content across curricular areas that promote student health such as teaching nutrition concepts in mathematics, and other subjects, with consultation provided by Administration and Acorn Montessori's Food Services.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state, association recognition efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments, will be coordinated with, and complementary of the school's wellness policy. All school sponsored events will adhere to wellness policy guidelines. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

II. Nutrition Standards

School Meals

The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

- a. All Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will participate in the National School Lunch Program.
- b. All meals will, at a minimum, meet the New Meal Pattern requirements.
- c. Free, potable water will be available to all students during meal periods.
- d. Additional standards include:
 - I. Menus will be posted on the school website for each campus.
 - II. School Meals are served in a clean and pleasant environment.
 - III. School Meals are accessible to all students.
 - IV. Plate presentation is appealing and attractive to students.
 - V. School meals will be administered by a team of child nutrition professionals.
 - VI. Accommodations will be made for students with special dietary needs.
 - VII. Students will be served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
 - VIII. Participation in Federal child nutrition programs will be promoted among students and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available at their school.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

- e. Nutrition standards for competitive foods and beverages must, at a minimum, meet the USDA's Smart Snacks in Schools guidelines. These guidelines apply to all foods sold in the following locations:
 - I. All Acorn Montessori Charter Schools campuses.
 - II. Individual grade, classroom, or clubs
 - III. Sporting events
 - IV. Snack carts or vending machines
- f. Additional Criteria:
 - I. Any competitive foods or beverages must support healthy eating during the school day and on campus.
 - II. All competitive foods sold will promote good nutritional habits.

Celebrations and Rewards

Arizona Law (ARS 15-242) states that all food and beverages served to students in grades K-8 must meet the USDA's Smart Snacks in Schools guidelines.

All foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. A list of healthy snacks will be provided to parents who wish to bring in snacks for their child's classroom. Additionally, alternative ideas for rewards will be provided to classrooms to help provide other ways to reward students without using food or beverages.

g. *These guidelines apply to (check all that apply):*

- ☒ School-sponsored events
- ☐ Celebrations and parties
- ☒ Classroom snacks provided by parents
- ☒ Classroom rewards and Incentives

Fundraising

- h. Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the school campus, and during the school day. Acorn Montessori Schools will make available to parents and teachers, a list of healthy fundraising ideas as requested. Examples of healthy fundraisers can be found at the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#).
- i. Frequency and duration of Fundraisers will be determined by Administration.

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

Food and beverage marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage marketing often includes an oral, written, or graphic statement made for the purpose of promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller, or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product. All products marketed on the school campus must, at a minimum, meet the Smart Snacks guidelines.

- j. Acorn Montessori Charter Schools is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Acorn Montessori Charter Schools strive to teach students how to make informed choices about nutrition, health, and physical activity. These efforts will be weakened if students are subjected to advertising on School property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information that Acorn Montessori Charter Schools is providing through nutrition education and health promotion efforts.
- k. It is the intent of Acorn Montessori Charter Schools to protect and promote student's health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with the school's wellness policy.

III. School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will convene a representative school wellness committee that meets to establish goals, and oversight, school health, safety policies, and programs, including development, implementation, periodic review, and updates to Acorn Montessori Charter Schools wellness policy.

- a. The school wellness committee will meet twice per year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring.
- b. Acorn Montessori Charter Schools Wellness Committee membership will represent all school classroom levels and include, to the extent possible, but not be limited to: parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program (e.g., Food Service Director); physical education teachers; health education teachers; school health professionals, school administrators (e.g., Owner/Director, principal, vice principal), school board members; health professionals (e.g., dietitians, doctors, nurses, dentists); and the general public. To the extent possible, Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will include representatives from each school building and reflect the diversity of the community.
- c. Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will use electronic mechanisms, such as email, social media, and notices on the school's website, as well as, non-electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or information notices sent home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the school's wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy.

Leadership

The district has designated one or more LEA and/or school official(s) who have the authority and responsibility to ensure each school complies with the local wellness policy.

- d. The designated official for oversight of implementation at each school is **Keith Johnson, Food Service Director**.
- e. The designated official for convening the wellness committee is **Kendal Healey, Principal**.
- f. The person designated for informing the public about the wellness policy is **Chuck Watson, Kitchen Manager**.

IV. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement

Implementation of the Wellness Policy

- a. Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan assigns roles, responsibilities, actions, and timelines specific to each school campus. It includes information about who will be responsible to make changes, as well as, when and where the changes are to take place. It will also list specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available

on the school campus; this includes food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, the LEA must assess their wellness policy. To accomplish this, Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will evaluate compliance with the school wellness policy and assess progress toward meeting the goals of the school wellness policy. Additionally, USDA requires that the school compare their policy to the “Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s” model wellness policy.

- a. Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will assess compliance and progress of their local wellness policy at least once every 3 years.
- b. Acorn Montessori Charter School Wellness Committee will meet twice per year to assess and discuss the progress on meeting the goals of the school’s wellness policy. A wellness assessment will be completed to identify areas of improvement and build upon positive outcomes from the school wellness policy.
 - i. The person responsible for this assessment is: **Keith Johnson, Food Service Director.**
- c. Sections I- IV of the wellness policy will be assessed by the Acorn Montessori Charter School Wellness Committee twice per year to assess and discuss the progress on meeting the goals of the school’s wellness policy. A wellness assessment will be completed to identify areas of improvement and build upon positive outcomes from the school wellness policy.
 - i. The person responsible for this assessment is: **Chuck Watson, Kitchen Manager.**
- d. Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will assess how their wellness policy compares to the Model Wellness Policy made available at “The Alliance for a Healthier Generation website”.
www.healthiergeneration.org
 - i. The person responsible for this assessment is: **Keith Johnson, Food Service Director.**

Revisions and Updating the Policy

- e. **The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.**
- f. Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will update or modify the wellness policy as appropriate. The school wellness committee will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual School Health Index and triennial assessments and/or as the school’s priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or State guidance or standards are issued.

Notification of Wellness Policy, Policy Updates and Triennial Assessment

Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will inform families and the public each year of any updates to the wellness policy, and every three years with their compliance with the written wellness policy.

- g. Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will provide the schools wellness policy on the school's webpage at www.acornmontessori.com

- h. The annual progress reports and updates can be found at:

Acorn Montessori Charter Schools Administrative Offices, and posted at
www.acornmontessori.com

- i. Acorn Montessori Charter Schools will make the Triennial Assessment available at:
www.acornmontessori.com