

# Wellness Policy

*Adopted by the Odyssey Charter Schools  
Governing Board on June 20, 2023*

The Governing Board of Odyssey Charter School and Odyssey Charter School-South is committed to the optimal development of every student. The Charter School believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, we need to create positive, safe and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables and dairy products are associated with lower grades among students. In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education and extracurricular activities – do better academically. Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.

This Policy outlines the Charter School's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this Policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students in the Charter School have access to healthy foods throughout the school day—both through universal school meals and other foods available throughout the Charter School campus—in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards.
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors.
- Students have opportunities to be physically active before, during and after the school day.
- The Charter School engages in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness.
- Charter School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school.
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of the Charter School in creating continuity between Charter School and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits.
- The Charter School establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of this Policy and its established goals and objectives.

This Policy applies to all students and staff in the Charter School. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

### **Charter School Wellness Designee**

The Executive Director has designated the following individual(s) as the school official(s) responsible for the implementation and oversight of this Policy to ensure that the Charter School complies with this Policy:

Melissa Herrera  
Director of Food Services  
[melissah@ocsmail.org](mailto:melissah@ocsmail.org)

## **Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement**

### **Implementation Plan**

Using the steps outlined below, will ensure that it meets legal obligations regarding implementation of this Policy. This Policy and the progress reports can be found at: [odysseycharterschool.org](http://odysseycharterschool.org)

### **Recordkeeping**

The Charter School will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of this policy in the main office. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written Policy.
- Documentation demonstrating that the Policy has been made available to the public.
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements and community involvement requirements;
- Documentation of the triennial assessment of the Policy.
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the Policy has been made available to the public.

### **Annual Notification of Policy**

The Wellness Policy and annual progress reports will be posted on the school website as the Board approves revisions of the policy and the approved policy is assessed. A progress report for each Charter School will include a summary of the areas assessed: nutrition education, standards for USDA child nutrition programs and school meals, nutrition standards for competitive and other food beverages, physical education and physical activity, wellness promotion and marketing, and implementation, evaluation, and communication.

Annually the Charter School will also publicize the name and contact information of the Charter School official(s) designated to implement this policy.

### **Triennial Progress Assessments**

At least once every three years, the Charter School will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the Policy and include:

- The extent to which the Charter School is in compliance with this Policy;
- The extent to which the Charter School's Policy compares to model wellness policies
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the Charter School's Policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is:

Melissa Herrera  
Director of Food Services ("Designee")  
melissah@ocsmail.org

The Designee(s) will monitor the Charter School's compliance with this Policy. The Charter School will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

### **Revisions and Updating the Policy**

The Wellness Policy will be revised as necessary and changes will be implemented the following trimester (if not sooner) of the school year after the Odyssey Charter Schools Governing Board has approved the policy. Every three years, Odyssey Charter Schools will review the latest national recommendations pertaining to school health and update the wellness policy. Any school stakeholders wishing to express a viewpoint, opinion, or complaint regarding these rules are encouraged to contact the designee.

### **Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications**

The Charter School is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the Policy. The Charter School will actively communicate ways in which members of the school community and others can collaborate with the Designee(s) to participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of this Policy through a variety of means. The Charter School will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in Charter School nutrition standards.

The Charter School will make efforts to recruit members via e-mail and notifications will be posted in a central area in all school buildings inviting members of the community to join. The Charter School will actively notify the public about the content of, the implementation of, and any updates to the Policy annually, at a minimum. The Charter School will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports. The following indicators to monitor policy compliance shall be used:

- Descriptions of the school's nutrition education, physical education, and health
- Wellness Curriculum
- Number of minutes of physical education offered at each grade level
- Results of the State's physical fitness test
- Student participation rates in school meal programs

- Any sales of non-nutritious foods and beverages at other venues outside of the school's meal programs
- Annual feedback from the Designee(s) which will be shared with the Charter Schools Governing Board, to evaluate the wellness policy, progress made in attaining the goals, and measurable outcomes

The Designee(s) will have the authority and responsibility to ensure each school complies with the Policy.

## Nutrition

### Meals

The Charter School participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program ("NSLP"), the School Breakfast Program ("SBP"), and The Seamless Summer Option ("SSO"). The Charter School also operates additional nutrition-related programs and activities including *school gardens programs*. The Charter School is committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students
- Are appealing and attractive to children
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings
- Meals served through the district's food services program shall comply with the National School Lunch and/or Breakfast Standards for meal patterns, nutrient levels, and calorie requirements for the ages/grade levels served, as specified in [7 CFR 210.10](#) or [220.8](#) as applicable.
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using at least ten of the following Smarter Lunchroom techniques:
  - Milk sold as part of the school meals program will be limited to 1% and skim, with no chocolate milk being served.
  - Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chafing dishes or hotel pans).
  - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily.
  - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students.
  - All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names.
  - Daily vegetable options are bundled into all grab-and-go meals available to students.
  - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students can select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
  - All School Nutrition Program directors, managers, and staff will meet hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA Professional Standards for Child Nutrition Professionals. These school nutrition personnel will refer to USDA's Professional standards for School Nutrition website for training that meets their learning needs.
  - White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers.
  - Alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas.

- o A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to students (e.g., salad bars, snack rooms, etc.). or the ages/grade levels served, as specified in [7 CFR 210.10](#) or [220.8](#) as applicable
- o Marketing strategies such as taste tests and signage in the cafeteria, should be used to promote healthy food and beverages throughout the school
- o Student artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas
- o Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options.

Students have the option of bringing their own lunch to school or participating in our school lunch program. Our school lunch will be prepared by an external food vendor. At least half of the grains served in school meals will be whole grains. Students are prohibited from leaving campus for lunch; therefore, students will be provided a pleasant environment and adequate time (minimum of 15 minutes) in which to eat lunch.

#### **Student Privacy**

The cafeterias are cashless- all students, regardless of the type of payment they make for school meals, or the food being purchased are given a code to enter at the cash register.

#### **Unpaid Meals**

Schools will reach out to the family of a child with an unpaid balance to assess whether the child is eligible for free or reduced price meals.

#### **Providing Families Info on Free/Reduced Eligibility**

Applications for free/reduced price meals are sent home to all families at the beginning of the school year. The application is also available on the district website.

#### **Fundraising**

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the [USDA Smart Snacks](#) in the Charter Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the Charter School campus during the school day. The Charter School will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas. All fundraisers held during the school day must meet smart snacks. There are no exemptions.

#### **Nutrition Education**

The Charter School is committed to the optimal development of every student. We believe in order for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, we need to create positive, safe and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year. The primary goal of nutrition education is to increase students' knowledge regarding healthy eating choices to enable them to adopt healthy eating behaviors. Nutrition education will be aligned with the California Health Education Content Standards and applicable law. Nutrition topics shall be integrated within the comprehensive health education curriculum and taught at every grade level. Instruction shall be culturally-responsive, based on accurate and current information, and provide the skills and motivation to focus on behavior change.

Students shall receive consistent nutrition messages throughout the school campus. Education materials shall be free of brands and illustrations of unhealthful foods and will include information about the nutritional content of meals. To encourage consistent nutrition messages between the home and school environment, we shall disseminate nutrition information to students, parents, guardians, staff, and community. Nutrition education shall be provided in the form of handouts, the school website, articles and information provided in school newsletters, presentations that focus on nutrition and healthy lifestyles, and through any other appropriate means available to reach parents. Outreach shall emphasize the relationship between student health and academic performance. Odyssey Charter Schools encourages the promotion of nutritious foods and beverages through signage, e-mails, newsletters, incentive programs, or other means. Display and advertising of unhealthy foods is strongly discouraged on school grounds. School based marketing shall be consistent with Smart Snacks nutrition standards.

### **Nutrition Standards and Guidelines**

Foods and beverages provided through federally reimbursable school meal programs shall meet or exceed federal regulations. Foods and beverages available to students at the Charter Schools will support the health curriculum and promote optimal health. Nutrition standards adopted by the Charter School for all foods and beverages sold to students on campus during the school day, including foods and beverages provided through the Charter School's food service program and other venues, shall meet or exceed State and Federal nutrition standards.

Food and beverages served or sold outside the federal meal program will also meet the following USDA school meal and Smart Snacks in School Nutrition standards guidelines. Food and beverages will:

- Have no more than 45% of its calories from fat
- Have no more than 10% of its calories from saturated fat
- Have no more than 200 mg of sodium per serving
- Not exceed 200 calories per individual package
- Be no more than 35% sugar by weight
- Be milk, water, or juice that is at least 50% fruit juice with no added sweeteners
- Follow the Institute of Medicine's recommendations for beverage serving sizes
- Vending machines are prohibited on school grounds.

### **Healthy Food**

At Odyssey Charter Schools, we strive to have a healthy school environment. When making nutritional decisions, the Charter School encourages all families to provide students with a healthy snacks every day. All students need to bring a healthy snack to school each day, such as proteins, fruits and vegetables. The Charter School encourages parents to send snacks that are low in sugar and other additives. Carbonated beverages, sports drinks, gum and candy are prohibited. Furthermore, school staff, student groups, and parent groups will be encouraged to refrain from using candy and snacks of minimal nutritional value as rewards to students or during school-sponsored events. We will also ensure students have access to free, fresh drinking water.

All foods offered on the Charter School campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Charter

School nutrition standards, including through:

1. Celebrations and parties. The Charter School will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas.
2. Classroom snacks brought by parents. The Charter School will provide to parents a list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards. The district will regulate all food and beverages served during classroom activities.
3. Rewards and incentives. The Charter School will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a list of alternative ways to reward children. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

### **Physical Education and Physical Activity Opportunities**

The primary goal for the promotion of physical activity is to increase students' knowledge and skills to enable them to adopt a physically active and healthful lifestyle. All students shall be provided opportunities to be physically active on a regular basis. Opportunities for moderate to vigorous physical activity shall be provided through physical and/or fitness education, daily recess, school athletic programs, before- and after-school programs, and other appropriate structured and unstructured activities such as yoga and stretching. Students will also receive information about sports and exercise opportunities in the community.

Our standards and goals for physical activities shall be based on current research, consistent with the expectations established in California's curriculum framework. In turn, we steadfastly adhere to the research-supported idea that consistent, quality physical activity and health nutritional choices enhance student health, behavior, attendance, and academic performance.

Students will be provided physical education instruction in a manner in which they shall receive the appropriate number of minutes per week (no less than 200 minutes every ten days for grades 1 through 8) of physical education instruction as recommended by California law. Physical education classes will have adequate student/teacher ratios and shall be provided adequate space and equipment and conform to all applicable safety standards. The Charter School shall not give physical education credit to students involved in extracurricular sports. Sports and academic activities may not take the place of physical education.

### **Other School-Based Activities Designed to Promote Student Wellness**

The Charter School shall create a school environment that promotes healthy eating and physical activity. In order to create this environment, Charter School shall:

- Provide a clean, safe, enjoyable meal environment for students
- Ensure students have access to drinking water and encourage them to have reusable water bottles
- Discourage the use of food as a reward or punishment
- Not use physical activity as a punishment
- All Staff involved in physical education shall be provided with opportunities for professional development. All physical education classes will be taught by a licensed Teacher

- Encourage parents/guardians, teachers, school administrators, students and community members to serve as role models in practicing healthy eating and being physically active, both in school and at home
- Encourage all students to participate in school meal programs
- Develop school gardens when feasible and as facility space and conditions allow
- Incorporate nutrition education lessons that cover different topics such as reading and understanding nutrition facts label on food products
- Link nutrition education activities with (CDC's) Coordinated School Health Program model
- Utilize signage to promote healthy food items available so students know which are healthy items
- Provide professional development in the area of food and nutrition for food service managers and staff
- Encourage classroom celebrations to focus on activities, rather than food
- Schools should provide students with opportunities for play when weather permits.
- Schools should promote walking and biking to and from school
- Unless otherwise exempted, all students will be required to engage in the District's Physical Education program