

Choice Academies Wellness Policy

Policy JL – Student Wellness

Choice Academies is committed to supporting the health, well-being, and academic success of every student. We strive to create school environments that promote healthy eating, physical activity, and lifelong wellness habits. Healthy students learn better, feel better, and are better equipped for success in and out of the classroom.

To support these goals, Choice Academies maintains a comprehensive Wellness Policy with guidelines in the following areas:

A. Nutrition Guidelines

All foods available during the school day will support student health and help reduce childhood obesity.

- All reimbursable meals meet or exceed USDA requirements.
- Foods sold or served on campus follow state and federal nutrition standards.

B. Nutrition Education

Our goal is to help students develop healthy eating habits through age-appropriate, culturally relevant, and engaging nutrition instruction.

Nutrition education may be integrated into health lessons, core subjects, physical education, and school-wide activities such as cooking demonstrations, taste tests, school gardens, and cafeteria promotions.

C. Physical Activity & Recess

Choice Academies supports regular physical activity as essential to student wellness.

- Students receive daily opportunities for physical activity.
- Recess is provided according to Arizona requirements, including two recess periods for grades K–5.
- Physical education is aligned with Arizona's Physical Education Standards.
- Recess may not be withheld for disciplinary reasons, except as necessary for safety.

D. Sunscreen

Students may bring and apply sunscreen without a medical note while on school property or at school-sponsored events.

E. Other School-Based Activities

Choice Academies aims to create a school-wide culture that supports healthy eating and regular physical activity. Examples include:

- Promoting a safe, comfortable eating environment
- Ensuring access to free drinking water
- Avoiding use of food as punishment or reward

F. Evaluation & Implementation

The effectiveness of the Wellness Policy is evaluated at least annually.

Reports include:

- Compliance with nutrition and physical activity standards
- Progress toward wellness goals
- Recommendations for improvements

Results are shared publicly.

G. Family, Community, and Staff Involvement

Choice Academies engages parents, students, staff, and community members in planning, reviewing, and improving wellness practices.

Nutrition Guidelines & Meal Programs

Reimbursable Meals

- All meals meet USDA and Arizona nutrition standards.
- Menus are developed by nutrition professionals.
- Free and reduced-price meal eligibility is confidential and handled respectfully.
- Students with unpaid meal charges will always receive meals without stigma.

Foods Sold on Campus (Smart Snacks)

- All competitive foods (à la carte, vending, fundraisers, after-school snacks) meet USDA Smart Snacks standards.
- Schools may use the Smart Snacks Product Calculator to determine compliance.

Celebrations & Classroom Parties

- Healthy options are encouraged.
- All foods must follow local food safety guidelines.
- Non-food rewards are recommended.

Fundraising

- Food fundraisers during the school day must comply with USDA Smart Snack standards.
- Non-food fundraisers are highly encouraged.

Wellness Promotion Activities

Eating Environment

- Students are given adequate time to eat (minimum 10 minutes for breakfast; 20 minutes for lunch).
- Meals are served at appropriate times.
- Free drinking water is accessible throughout the school day.

Marketing of Foods

- Only foods that meet Smart Snack standards may be marketed or advertised on campus.

Communication

- Nutrition information is shared through school communications, events, and digital platforms.
- Families are encouraged to participate in school meal programs.

Cafeteria Strategies

- Schools aim to implement Smarter Lunchroom techniques to promote healthy choices.

Physical Activity Promotion

- Physical activity breaks are encouraged in classrooms.
- Family and community involvement in physical activity events is supported.
- Active transportation (walking/biking) is encouraged.

Community Partnerships

- Choice Academies collaborates with local organizations to promote wellness.
- Staff wellness activities and opportunities are offered annually.

Implementation, Monitoring & Evaluation

District Wellness Committee (DWC)

The DWC oversees assessment, planning, and implementation of the wellness policy. Members may include:

- Parents
- Teachers and administrators
- Students
- Nutrition staff
- Healthcare professionals
- Community partners

The DWC meets multiple times per year, sets annual goals, and reviews wellness data.

Monitoring

- Principals ensure compliance at the school level.
- The Nutrition Department ensures meal programs meet all regulations.
- The Superintendent/Designee oversees district-wide compliance.

Assessments

- A full wellness assessment occurs at least once every three years.
- Reports are made available to the public on the Choice Academies website and at district offices.

Public Notice

- The Wellness Policy and annual progress reports will be accessible to all families and community members.

This institution is an **equal opportunity provider**.