

Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles (MGLA) Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition

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) 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, school districts 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, Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles is committed to providing a school environment that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles that:

- The school will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing school-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades 9-12 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*.
- Students will be provided with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students with accommodation to the religious, ethnic, and cultural 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, all students in our school will be encouraged to participate in available federal school meal programs including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program and after-school snacks.
- Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles will encourage 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.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. School Health Councils

Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles will create, strengthen, and work within existing school health councils to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The councils also will serve as resources to Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles for implementing those policies.

A school health council consists of a group of individuals representing the school, and should include parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, members of the school board, school administrators, teachers, and health professionals.

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs 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;¹
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk² and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA); and
- ensure that all of the served grains are enriched or whole grain.^{3,3}

Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles should engage students, through taste-tests of new entrees and surveys, in selecting foods served through the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthful, and appealing food choices. In addition, Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles should share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information could be made available, on cafeteria menu boards, placards, or other point-of-purchase materials.

Breakfast. To ensure that all children have breakfast, and in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn:

- Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles will, to the extent possible, operate the School Breakfast Program.
- Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles will, to the extent possible utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation, including serving “grab-and-go” breakfast.
- Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles as a breakfast provider to students will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals. Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles 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 meals⁴. Toward this end, Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles may utilize electronic identification; provide meals at no charge to all children, regardless of income; promote the availability of school meals to all students; and/or use nontraditional methods for serving school meals, such as “grab-and-go”.

¹ To the extent possible, schools will offer at least two non-fried vegetable and two fruit options each day and will offer five different fruits and five different vegetables over the course of a week. Schools are encouraged to source fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers when practicable.

² As recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*.

³ A whole grain is one labeled as a “whole” grain product or with a whole grain listed as the primary grain ingredient in the ingredient statement. Examples include “whole” wheat flour, cracked wheat, brown rice, and oatmeal.

⁴ It is against the law to make others in the cafeteria aware of the eligibility status of children for free, reduced-price, or “paid” meals.

Meal Times and Scheduling.

Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles:

- will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- should 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 high tooth decay risk).

Sharing of Foods and Beverages. Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles 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 (*i.e.*, foods sold outside of reimbursable school meals, such as through vending machines, cafeteria, fundraisers, school stores, etc.)

High Schools. In high schools, all foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs including those sold through a vending machines, or fundraising activities during the school day, or through programs for students after the school day, will meet the following nutrition and portion size standards:

Beverages

- **Allowed:** water or seltzer water⁵ without added caloric sweeteners; fruit and vegetable juices and fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA);
- **Not allowed:** soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sports drinks; iced teas; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50% real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine,

⁵ Surprisingly, seltzer water may not be sold during meal times in areas of the school where food is sold or eaten because it is considered a "Food of Minimal Nutritional Value" (Appendix B of 7 CFR Part 210).

excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine).

Foods

- A choice of at least two fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered during lunch in Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles where food is being offered. Such items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit or vegetable juice; fruit-based drinks that are at least 50% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners.

Fundraising Activities. To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the above nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages sold individually. Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity.

Snacks. Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will 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. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations. Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers and after-school program personnel.

- Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles provides snacks through after-school programs, and will pursue receiving reimbursements through the National School Lunch Program.

Rewards. Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles 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,⁶ and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

Celebrations. Schools should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above).

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

⁶ Unless this practice is allowed by a student's individual education plan (IEP).

Nutrition Education and Promotion. Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles 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;
- 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);
- 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 (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.
- opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Daily Physical Education (P.E.) 9-10. All students in grades 9-10, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive daily physical education or its equivalent of 225 minutes/week for high 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 students will have at least 20 minutes a day of recess, preferably outdoors, during which Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles would discourage extended periods (*i.e.*, periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles would give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After Class. All students at Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles high school will be offered extracurricular physical activity programs.

Physical Activity and Punishment. Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (*e.g.*, running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (*e.g.*, recess, physical education) as punishment.

Use of School Facilities Outside of Classroom Hours. School spaces and facilities should be available to students before during, and after the school day. School policies concerning safety will apply at all times.

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring. The principal of Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles or designee will ensure compliance with established school-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies.

School food service staff, at Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles, will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the school principal. In addition, the Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes. If Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles has not received a SMI review from the state agency within the past five years, then Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles will request from the state agency that a SMI review be scheduled as soon as possible.

Policy Review. To help with the initial development of the school's wellness policies, Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's

existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies.⁷ The results of those assessments will be compiled to identify and prioritize needs.

Assessments will be repeated every year to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles will review its 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. Mesivta of Greater Los Angeles, will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate its implementation.

⁷ Useful self-assessment and planning tools include the *School Health Index* from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), *Changing the Scene* from the Team Nutrition Program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and *Opportunity to Learn Standards for Elementary, Middle, and High School Physical Education* from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education.