

Creative Montessori Academy Wellness Policy

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Creative Montessori Academy Wellness Policy

Preamble

Creative Montessori Academy (CMA) is committed to the optimal development of every student. CMA 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. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism and better performance on cognitive tasks.^{1,2,3,5,7} Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students.^{8,9,10} 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.^{11,12,13,14} Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.^{15,16,17}

This policy outlines CMA'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 at CMA have access to healthy foods throughout the school day - through reimbursable school meals- 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 during and after school
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness
- 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 CMA in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- CMA establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all students, staff and schools in CMA. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

I. School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

CMA will convene a representative district wellness committee (hereto referred to as the DWC or work within an existing school health committee) that meets regularly to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation

and periodic review and update of this district-level wellness policy (heretofore referred as "wellness policy").

The DWC membership will represent all school levels and include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program (e.g., school nutrition director); physical education teachers; health education teachers; school health professionals (e.g., health education teachers, school health services staff [e.g., nurses, physicians, dentists, health educators, and other allied health personnel who provide school health services], and mental health and social services staff [e.g., school counselors, psychologists, social workers, or psychiatrists]; school administrators (e.g., superintendent, principal, vice principal), school board members; health professionals (e.g., dietitians, doctors, nurses, dentists); and the general public.

Leadership

The Superintendent or designee(s) will convene the DWC and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy and will ensure each school's compliance with the policy.

The designated official for oversight is the school's Wellness Ambassador, Gloria Napper. The name(s), title(s), and contact information of this/these individual(s) is (are):

Name	Title	Email address	Role on Committee
Dr. Alan Carter	Headmaster	alancarter@choiceschools.com	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Nicole Weeks	Food Service Director	nicoleweeks@choiceschools.com	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Tony Attanasio	PE/Health Teacher	tonyattanasio@choiceschools.com	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Judy Smith	Upper Elementary Teacher	judithsmith@choiceschools.com	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Sara Al-Zrouf	School Parent	alzroufs@gmail.com	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Sarah Pettigrew	School Parent	teampettigrew@gmail.com	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation

Gloria Napper	Wellness Ambassador	glorianapper@choiceschools.com	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
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II. Wellness Policy Implementation. Monitoring. Accountability and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

CMA will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions and timelines specific to the school; and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where and when; as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.

This wellness policy and the progress reports can be found at: www.creative-montessori.com

Recordkeeping

CMA will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy in the Main Office. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public
- Documentation of efforts to review and update the Local Schools Wellness Policy; including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods CMA uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the DWC;
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the local school wellness policy
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the Local School Wellness Policy has been made available to the public.

Annual Notification of Policy

CMA will actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates to the policy and implementation status. CMA will make this information available via CMA website and/or district-wide communications. CMA will provide as much information as possible about the school nutrition environment. This will include a summary of CMA's events or activities related to wellness policy implementation. Annually, CMA will also publicize the name and contact information of CMA/school officials leading and coordinating the committee, as well as information on how the public can get involved with the school wellness committee.

Triennial Progress Assessments

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

- The extent to which CMA is following the wellness policy
- The extent to which CMA's wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of CMA's wellness policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is Gloria Napper, Wellness Ambassador.

The DWC, in collaboration with individual schools, will monitor schools' compliance with this wellness policy.

CMA will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The DWC will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the triennial assessments and/or as CMA'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. The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.

Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications

CMA is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. CMA will actively communicate ways in which representatives of DWC and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for that district. CMA 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 School nutrition standards. CMA will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on CMA's website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. CMA will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community and accomplished through means similar to ways that CMA communicates important school information with parents.

CMA will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. CMA will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

III. Nutrition

School Meals

CMA is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams *trans-fat* per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. 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.

CMA participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). CMA 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
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (CMA offers reimbursable school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards.)

Promote healthy food and beverage choices using these marketing and merchandising techniques:

- Whole, 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.
- All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
- White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers.
- School meals are administered by a team of child nutrition professionals.
- CMA child nutrition program will accommodate students with special dietary needs.
- Students will be allowed at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal and are seated.
- Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
- Lunch may follow the recess period to better support learning and healthy eating.
- Participation in Federal child nutrition programs will be promoted among students and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their children's school.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed 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 Standards website to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day. CMA will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. A water bottle refill station is available to all students throughout the school day.

Water cups/jugs will be available in the cafeteria if a drinking fountain is not present. All water sources and containers will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene and health safety standards. Such sources and containers may include drinking fountains, water jugs, hydration stations, water jets and other methods for delivering drinking water.

Students are encouraged and allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

CMA is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students at school during the school day to support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (e.g., "competitive" foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards.

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition including through:

- Celebrations and parties. CMA will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas.
- Classroom snacks brought by parents.
- Rewards and incentives. CMA 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.

Fundraising

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers at school during the school day. CMA will try to use only non-food fundraisers and encourage those fundraisers promoting physical activity (such as walkathons, Jump Rope for Heart, fun runs, etc.).

Fundraising during and outside school hours will try to sell only non-food items or foods and beverages that meet or exceed the Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These fundraisers may include but are not limited to, donation nights at restaurants, cookie dough, candy and pizza sales, market days, etc.

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 in the gymnasium. 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.

CMA will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs.

Nutrition Education

CMA will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students. CMA 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

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

CMA will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 of the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- Relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Food guidance from MyPlate
- Reading and using FDA's nutrition fact labels
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- Eating more fruits, vegetables and wholegrain products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain *trans* fat
- Choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars
- Eating more calcium-rich foods
- Preparing healthy meals and snacks
- Risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Making healthy choices when eating at restaurants
- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Reducing sodium intake
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to nutrition and dietary behavior
- How to develop a plan and track progress toward achieving a personal goal to eat healthfully
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior
- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

CMA 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. CMA strives 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 CMA is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of CMA 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 CMA's wellness policy.

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students at school during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Food and beverage marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage marketing often includes an oral, written, or graphic statements made for 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.¹⁵ This term includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Brand names, trademarks, logos or tags, except when placed on a physically present food or beverage product or its container.
- Displays, such as on vending machine exteriors
- Corporate brand, logo, name or trademark on school equipment, such as marquees, message boards, scoreboards or backboards
- Corporate brand, logo, name or trademark on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans and other food service equipment; as well as on posters, book covers, pupil assignment books or school supplies displayed, distributed, offered or sold by CMA.
- Advertisements in school publications or school mailings.
- Free product samples, taste tests or coupons of a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product.

As CMA school nutrition services and the Athletics Department reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by CMA wellness policy.

IV. 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 reflects strong coordination and synergy across all the components: quality physical education as the foundation; physical activity before, during and after school; staff involvement and family and community engagement and CMA is committed to providing these opportunities. Schools will ensure that these varied physical

addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education (addressed in "Physical Education" subsection).

Recess plays a vital role in child development, benefitting children emotionally, socially, physically, and academically. Recess is not meant to be a privilege or a reward. **Recess is essential and not a bargaining tool.** Recess **will not** be taken from a child who has misbehaved. CMA will provide teachers and other school staff with a list of ideas for alternative ways to discipline students. With that being stated, teachers and other school personnel **will not** use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) as punishment.

To the extent practicable, CMA will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe, and that equipment is available to students to be active. CMA will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

Physical Education

CMA will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts (discussed in the "*Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education*" subsection). The curriculum will support the essential components of physical education.

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. CMA will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

All **elementary students** in each grade will receive physical education for at least 40 minutes per week throughout the school year.

CMA physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments (via the Presidential Youth Fitness Program) and will use criterion-based reporting for each student.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

Health education will be required in middle school. CMA will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 the following essential topics on physical activity:

- The physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Health-related fitness, that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- Differences between physical activity, exercise and fitness
- Phases of an exercise session, that is, warm up, workout and cool down Overcoming barriers to physical activity
- Decreasing sedentary activities, such as TV watching Opportunities for physical activity in the community
- Preventing injury during physical activity
- Weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia, and sunburn while being physically active



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- How much physical activity is enough, that is, determining frequency, intensity, time and type of physical activity
- Dangers of using performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids
- Social influences on physical activity, including media, family, peers and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness
- How to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity.

Recess

CMA will offer at least **20 minutes of recess** on all days during the school year. This policy may be waived on early dismissal or late arrival days. If recess is offered before lunch, schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing time, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves, will be built into the recess transition period/timeframe before students enter the cafeteria.

Outdoor recess will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play.

If the school must conduct **indoor recess**, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable.

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Classroom Physical Activity Breaks

CMA recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered **periodic opportunities** to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. CMA recommends teachers provide short (3-5-minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom time at least three days per week. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into "core" subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

After School Activities

CMA offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity after the school day through a variety of methods. CMA will encourage students to be physically active after school by providing sports activities and clubs like Run Club for students to pursue physical activities.

V. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

CMA will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues and physical activity facilities. CMA 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.

CMA staff are encouraged to coordinate content across curricular areas that promote student health, such as teaching nutrition concepts in mathematics, with consultation provided by either the school or CMA's curriculum experts.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of the wellness policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the DWC/SWC.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy guidelines. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

Community Partnerships

CMA will continue relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, SNAP-Ed providers and coordinators, etc.) in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

CMA will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

As described in the "Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications" subsection, CMA will use electronic mechanisms (e.g., email or displaying notices on CMA's website), as well as non-electronic mechanisms, (e.g., newsletters, presentations to parents or sending information home to parents), to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

The DWC will have a staff wellness subcommittee that focuses on staff wellness issues, identifies and disseminates wellness resources and performs other functions that support staff wellness in coordination with human resources staff. The subcommittee leader's name is Gloria Napper, Wellness Ambassador.

CMA will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors.

When feasible, CMA will offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school. Professional learning will help staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing school reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

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¹⁵ Change Lab Solutions. (2014). *District Policy Restricting the Advertising of Food and Beverages Not Permitted to be Sold on School Grounds*. Retrieved from <http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/district-policy-school-food-ads>