

## Wellness Policy

### St Mary's School

#### Ord, NE

St. Mary's School is committed to the optimal development of every student, and we believe 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.

This policy outlines our approach to ensuring these healthy environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day. Therefore, to meet the goals of (1) students having access to healthy foods, (2) students having opportunities to be physically active during the school day, and (3) students engaging in nutrition and physical activity promotion to promote wellness, the following guidelines are adopted:

1. All students have access to the Ord High School Lunch Program, which is a participant in the National School Lunch Program and is monitored by the Nebraska State Department of Education. The lunch facility is located at Ord High School (OHS), and students are provided transportation or walk to the facility with school staff each school day.
  - a. Students walk to the High School lunchroom on days that weather allows, providing them with roughly an additional 20 minutes of daily physical activity, in addition to scheduled recess and Physical Education
  - b. Students are scheduled to sit for 20-30 minutes to eat lunch.
  - c. Students have access to Free and Reduced Lunches through the National School Lunch Program as needed. St Mary's School will make every effort to protect the privacy of students who qualify for free and reduced priced lunches by having all students enter their own lunch number into the computer at mealtime. Monthly statements of lunch account balances are printed by OHS lunch staff and given to St Mary's Staff. St Mary's staff then distributes statements confidentially to students at the end of the month.
  - d. Free and Reduced Lunch Program applications are provided for all families at the beginning of the school year through Ord Public Schools.
  - e. Lunch is prepared and served out to St Mary's students by OHS Lunch staff. On inclement weather days where lunch is brought to students at St. Mary's School, lunch is served out and portioned into individual container for each student by OHS staff as well. St Mary's staff is exempt from participation in the annual food and nutrition services training programs in accordance with the USDA Professional Standards.
2. Snacks may be provided by students' parents and allergy information is anonymously shared for the benefit of the students and parents.
  - a. Currently, snacks are provided by parents.
  - b. If a student has a known allergy, arrangements are made with the Student's parents/guardians to ensure that safe snacks are available, and classroom parents/caregivers are notified about allergies anonymously to minimize risk of exposure.
  - c. A healthy snacks pamphlet will be sent home at the beginning of each year, with information regarding snack policies for each individual classroom, with a suggestion for possible snack options.
  - d. A link to the Smart Snacks brochure from the USDA will be available on the school website, and the website printed in the school handbook given to parents at the beginning of the school year. Parents will be encouraged to consult this brochure and website when planning what snacks they will bring in.
3. A water bottle may be used by students and the school's water fountains have spouts to fill water bottles. All students have access to fill their water bottles free of charge and are encouraged to bring a refillable water bottle to school to be kept at their desk. No other beverages are provided for students free of charge.
  - a. There are no vending machines located on the school campus.
  - b. No food is sold at afterschool activities, and St Mary's does not hold fundraising using food that will be consumed in school.
4. No marketing or advertising is allowed for foods and beverages that do not meet the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.
  - a. Currently, no advertising is displayed in St Mary's School
  - b. Healthy Snacks and Nutrition Education posters will be displayed periodically encouraging healthy eating behaviors.
5. Recess breaks are provided for a total of approximately 50 minutes per school day, and students spend time on the playground, the school or church grounds, or in the school gym, depending on the weather. Ample equipment is provided for the children.
  - a. Students are encouraged to participate in physical play that is not structured by adults.
  - b. If possible, students are encouraged to be outdoors for recess. On days that weather prevents students from playing outside, students are encouraged to play in the gym.
  - c. Students are offered three recess breaks per day.

- d. Teachers are encouraged to use physical activity as needed for students
  - e. Staff walks with St Mary's students who ride the Ord Public School (OPS) bus route to OPS High School bus stop until students demonstrate ability to walk safely on their own.
6. Physical Education is provided as a regular part of the students' curriculum, for a total of approximately 90 minutes per week.
- a. Students are encouraged to apply the nutrition education they receive in their science curriculum when making snack choices.
  - b. St. Mary's School participated in the LIFT Grant program with the local Nebraska extension office and the Nebraska Department of Education.
  - c. PE is scheduled into the school day twice a week.
7. Leadership for the Wellness Policy consists of the head teacher, parish priest, school board, and diocese superintendent, School Nurse, and the Nebraska Extension Educator. Meetings will be held quarterly, coordinated with school board meetings. Meetings will be posted on the academic calendar and on the school website to encourage participation from parents and community members.
8. Participation by the public, which may include snacks provided for celebrations and other events, is done so with the wellness and health (i.e., allergies) of the students in mind, in addition to allergy considerations of each student.
- a. Food for celebrations is determined by the Classroom Teacher. If needed, exceptions are addressed in a case-by-case situation with the Classroom Teacher, Student, Parent/Caregiver and School Nurse.
  - b. Parents are encouraged to consult the Smart Snacks website when choosing foods to be brought in
9. Any food provided is done so with the health of the students in mind, in addition to allergy considerations of each student.
- a. Celebrations involving food are scheduled for at least 2 hours after lunch time to encourage students to eat nutritious meals provided through the USDA school lunch program and not "save room" for snacking.
  - b. Teachers make all reasonable attempts to avoid using food as rewards, often using extra recess time or movie parties as motivators.

Reviewed by School Board 05/27/2026