



## WELLNESS POLICY

Comments/feedback welcomed as part of the annual review/revision process. Please see section VI below that addresses the most recent evaluation and progress made in attaining the goals of this policy. Please email comments to [mwhite@villageforchildren.org](mailto:mwhite@villageforchildren.org).

### I. Nutrition Education and Promotion

#### A. Goals

- To positively influence children's eating behaviors by providing educational experiences that help develop lifelong healthy habits
- To provide an environment that encourages and supports healthy eating by all children

#### B. Nutrition Education

Nutrition education will be provided as part of the comprehensive health education program that is integrated into the Resident, EDT and Early Childhood curricula. Health education will include Nutrition, Hygiene, Dental Care, Medication, Physical Activity, Body Changes and Functions.

- Nutrition education will be offered at grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skill necessary to promote and protect their health
- Nutrition education will be based on United States Department of Agriculture, American Academy of Pediatrics or State of Connecticut Department of Children and Families guidelines.
- Preschool nutrition instruction will be aligned with NAEYC standards and the Connecticut Preschool Curriculum Framework
- Nutrition and health education for school-age children will be taught by State of Connecticut certified teachers

As age-appropriate, nutrition education will be designed to help students learn:

- To make healthy food choices
- To identify foods from all food groups to meet nutrient needs
- To read food labels
- To evaluate personal eating habits and identify goals for improvement
- To identify healthy weight and weight management skills

- Caloric balance between food intake and physical activity
- Safe food handling, storage, and preparation
- To identify and reduce foods of low nutrient density

Learning activities will include enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, participatory activities. This may include contests, walkathons, taste testing, farm visits and an onsite vegetable garden. Learning activities will promote consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low fat dairy products, and preparation methods to enhance nutritional value of foods and health. Lessons will emphasize positive health benefits of following the U.S. Dietary Guidelines such as wellness and disease prevention.

### ***C. Nutrition Education for Other Residential and After School Programs***

The primary source of health education for children in the Village's other residential and extended day programs is the school that they attend. This is supplemented by periodic health classes, which include nutrition education.

The Registered Nurse for each program shall provide individualized education for children in accordance with their Nursing Care Plans.

### ***D. Staff Resources and Responsibilities***

Staff nurses will serve as a resource to other staff on general nutrition as well as in meeting children's individual needs. Inservices will be provided on health and nutrition pertaining to personal health as well as child nutrition as needed.

When eating meals with children, staff will eat the school breakfast and school lunch being served. Foods from outside of the Village food service should be consumed during scheduled breaks out of view of the children.

Staff will encourage (but not pressure) students to try a variety of foods.

### ***E. Information for Families***

Educational information about nutrition shall be made available to caregivers by including materials in orientation and/or transition packets, or regularly sending materials home with children, as appropriate to the specific program.

Nurses provide nutrition education, as needed, to caregivers of children in residential care to support healthy eating during visitation and following discharge.

## **II. Nutrition Standards & Guidelines**

*Child Nutrition Programs* includes programs authorized under the Child Nutrition Act, including but not limited to, National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Child and Adult Care Food Program. To the maximum extent possible, the Village will operate and provide children access to all applicable programs, including the Summer Food Service and Afterschool Snack Programs.

## **A. Goals**

- To provide nutritious meals and snacks that support the healthy growth and development of children and promote the development of healthful eating behaviors
- To promote children's satisfaction with the food service program by developing varied menus that reflect the cultures and preferences of children and families

## **B. School Meals**

Meals served through Child Nutrition Programs will meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations. The Village will offer varied and nutritious food choices that are consistent with the federal government's current Dietary Guidelines, which emphasize reducing fats and added sugars, moderate portion size, and increased consumption of whole grains, fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products. No guideline or practice for meals and snacks will be less restrictive than those set by the Secretary of Agriculture.

**1. Beverages.** Beverages provided to children as part of a reimbursable meal or snack will be limited to the five categories allowed under Connecticut General Statutes Section 10-221q: milk, nondairy milk, 100% fruit and/or vegetable juice, and beverages containing only water and fruit or vegetable juice, and water.

**2. Portion Sizes.** All meals and snacks offered through Child Nutrition Programs will meet the components and minimum required serving sizes specified in the USDA meal pattern. Minimum serving sizes specified in the meal pattern may not be sufficient amounts of food and additional items or increased serving sizes may be appropriate.

Portion sizes of snacks and desserts will be limited in accordance with the serving size limits specified in Connecticut's Healthy Snack Standards. The portion size of beverages (excluding water) will be limited to no more than 12 ounces.

**3. Pricing.** Meals and snacks will be provided at no charge to all children, regardless of income.

**4. Substitutions and Modifications.** With appropriate documentation, modified meals will be prepared for students with food allergies or other special dietary needs

## **C. Time for Meals**

During breakfast and lunch, at least 20 minutes will be provided for eating after food is served or obtained.

Children's schedules and obligations shall avoid conflicts with meal and snack time to the extent reasonably possible.

## **D. Other School Food and Beverages**

**1. Competitive Foods.** No food is available for purchase by children during the regular school day. Competitive foods will be made available only in compliance

with federal and state requirements.

**2. Beverages.** On a limited basis, other beverages, such as soda, hot chocolate, and juice drinks, may be provided during special events when not part of a reimbursable snack or meal.

**3. Punishment.** Food and beverages will not be withheld as punishment. If a snack is provided, all children – regardless of behavior – will have the opportunity to partake.

#### ***E. Nutrition Qualifications***

The Food Service Management Company contracted by the Village will be required to employ or otherwise formally engage a certified dietician-nutritionist to advise and assist in the development of menus.

### **III. Physical Activity and Physical Education**

#### ***A. Goals***

- To maximize children’s physical activity by providing a variety of opportunities for gross motor movement
- To provide skills, knowledge and experiences that will promote a lifelong active lifestyle

#### ***B. Physical Education for School/School Readiness Programs***

Physical education will be provided as part of the comprehensive health education program that is integrated into the Residential, EDT and Early Childhood curricula.

- Each child will participate in regularly scheduled fitness classes/periods.
- Developmentally appropriate instruction will be provided for all students in a variety of motor skills.
- Active teaching of cooperation, fair play and responsible participation shall promote full inclusion of all children.
- Children are given choices whenever possible to maximize their participation.
- Children shall spend 15 minutes or more in moderate to vigorous physical activity during the class/period.

#### ***C. Physical Activity Across Residential, Day and After School Programs***

Adequate and safe indoor and outdoor facilities and equipment will be provided for all children.

Children should accumulate at least 60 minutes, and up to several hours, of age-appropriate physical activity on all or most days of the week.

#### ***D. Expectations of Staff***

All Village program staff, including teachers, therapists, nurses, child development specialists, doctors and administrative personnel, shall work to influence children’s health

behaviors. Ways to promote physical activity include:

- Create physical activity plans
- Join in children's games on the playground or in the gym
- Promote appropriate safety gear, such as helmets, during bike rides
- Encouraging outside sports activities such as baseball and basketball teams

Physical activity, restricted or extra, shall not be used for punishment

#### **IV. Food Safety**

##### ***A. Goals***

- To promote awareness, conditions and behaviors that prevent foodborne illness

##### ***B. Practices and Procedures***

Hand-washing or sanitizing supplies are available, so students and staff can clean hands and surfaces before eating.

Practices will comply with the State of Connecticut Public Health Code 19-13-B42 Sanitation of Places Dispensing Foods or Beverages and with Connecticut Qualified Food Operator legislation.

A Food Safety Program is in place that complies with Section 111 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 that requires all schools participating in Child Nutrition Programs to implement a school food safety program in accordance with Hazard Analysis & Critical Control Points principles.

##### ***C. Employee Training***

All Village employees with food service responsibilities shall receive training annually in basic food safety practices and the Village's HACCP plan related to: proper temperature control; food protection; personal health and cleanliness; and sanitation of the facilities, equipment, supplies and utensils.

The Village will have a minimum of one QFO and one or more alternate at each residential house or program site where food that was prepared using hot processes is regularly served to children. QFOs are responsible for ensuring that employees with food service responsibilities at their sites receive training.

#### **V. Communication and Promotion**

##### ***A. Goals***

- To convey consistent messages that reinforce the goals of the wellness policy
- To ensure two-way communication in promoting school wellness

##### ***B. Expectations of Staff***

All staff involved with children will promote adherence to U.S.D.A MY Plate guidelines to make healthy food choices.

Staff will not discuss their own personal health beliefs or opinions with children. This includes personal dieting practices and supplement use.

Only health and nutrition information from recognized scientific or public health authorities will be promoted.

### ***C. Involvement of Stakeholders***

#### **1. Development of the Wellness Policy**

The policy, and revisions as needed, shall be drafted by a committee composed of management and staff representing programs that receive food services and the food service management company. Input from parents and children will be solicited by staff in each program area, who will share proposed goals and guidelines with a brief questionnaire to prompt responses.

Prior to adoption, the policy will be posted on the Village's website for public comment. Once finalized, the policy will be forwarded for the review and approval of agency leadership and Board of Directors in accordance with agency procedures.

#### **2. Menu Planning**

Residential supervisors will ensure that children are surveyed twice per year about their menu likes and dislikes, favorite foods, and suggestions for healthy snacks. Surveys will be summarized by the directors/administrators for the residential, extended day, and early childhood programs.

Menus shall be posted, and provided upon request, so that parents and caregivers may review and comment on them. For residential programs, information about family and child eating habits will be gathered by clinical and nursing staff during intake and assessment.

Parental feedback and results of children's surveys will be forwarded to the Manager of Facilities Administration who is responsible for overseeing the food service management company. She will discuss the results with the Food Service Director during regularly scheduled food service operations meetings.

## **VI. Measurement and Evaluation**

The Operations Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy on an annual basis. The Associate Vice-President of Programs and the Senior Director of Intensive Services will report to the committee about how the respective programs are meeting the policy standards and expectations. Although not regular members of the committee, a school nurse and the Food Service Director will also participate in this review.

The most recent review of the policy occurred in November 2016. The Associate Vice-President of Programs, the Senior Director of Intensive Services, the Director of Compliance, the school nurse and Medical Director reviewed the policy. In addition, feedback on the policy and its' implementation was gathered from the Operations Committee and Food Service Director. The assessment and review found that the Village's program was in compliance with the Wellness

Policy. Strengths of the policy implementation include an increase in creative physical activities for the children such as a new jump rope program, regular walks and a “Life is Good Playmakers” program. Surveys from the clients were collected as well and they provided good feedback on the quality of the meals and snacks. In addition, over the coming year we will look to continue to enhance our health education for clients.

## **VII. Revisions/Approval**

Reviewed and approved by agency Operations Committee on 11/10/2016