Wellness Policy

Scintilla Charter Academy (SCA) is committed to the optimal development of every scholar. SCA believes that for scholars 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 good nutrition and physical activity before, during, and after the school day are strongly correlated with positive scholar outcomes. For example, scholar participation in the US 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. Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods, including fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among scholars. In addition, scholars 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. Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.

This policy outlines SCA's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all scholars 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:

- Scholars in SCA have access to healthy foods throughout the school day, through reimbursable school meals, in accordance with Federal and State Nutrition Standards;
- Scholars receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Scholars have opportunities to be physically active during and after school;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote scholar 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 SCA in creating continuity between school and other settings for scholars and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits;
- SCA establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, and communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives;

Note: This policy applies to all scholars and staff. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified in each section below.

SCHOOL WELLNESS COMMITTEE

Revised: August 26, 2026

Committee Role and Membership

SCA will convene a representative Wellness Committee that meets at least four times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including the development, implementation, and periodic review and updating of this Wellness Policy.

The Wellness Committee membership will represent all school levels and may include, but not be limited to, parents and caregivers, scholars, representatives of the school nutrition program, physical education teachers, health education teachers, school health professionals including the School Nurse and the School Counselor, School Administrators, school board members, and community stakeholders.

Leadership

The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee will convene the Wellness Committee, facilitate the development and updates to the Wellness Policy, and ensure the school's compliance with this policy.

WELLNESS POLICY IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Implementation Plan

SCA will develop and maintain an implementation plan to manage and coordinate the execution of this Wellness Policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions and timelines; 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 scholar wellness.

This Wellness Policy and reports will be made available on the SCA website.

Recordkeeping

SCA will retain records to document compliance with the Wellness Policy requirements.
Documentation includes:
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy, including the most recent assessment, has been made available to the public;
- Documentation of efforts to review and update the Wellness Policy, including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods SCA uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the Wellness Committee;
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements;
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the Wellness Policy;

Annual Notification of Policy

SCA will inform families and the public each year with basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates, and its implementation status. SCA will make this information available via the

school website and/ or other communications, such as the Handbook. SCA will provide as much information as possible about the school nutrition environment. This will include a summary of the school's events and activities related to the implementation of the Wellness Policy. Annually, SCA will also publicize the name and contact information of the 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, SCA will evaluate compliance with the Wellness Policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent in which SCA is in compliance with the Wellness Policy
- The progress made toward attaining the goals of the Wellness Policy
- The extent to which the Wellness Policy compares to the Model Wellness Policy.

The Wellness Committee will monitor SCA's compliance with the Wellness Policy.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The Wellness Committee will update or modify the Wellness Policy based on the results of the triennial assessments and/or as school priorities change, community needs change, wellness goals are met, new health science, information, and technology emerges, or 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 Communication

SCA is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the Wellness Policy. SCA will communicate ways in which representatives of the Wellness Committee and others can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the Wellness Policy through a variety of means appropriate for the school. SCA will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the school'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 notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the Wellness Policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy

SCA will notify the public at least annually about the content of the Wellness Policy and any updates to it. SCA will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

NUTRITION GUIDELINES

School Meals

SCA is committed to serving healthy meals to our scholars, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk. These meals will be moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, contain zero grams of artificial trans fat per serving (per the manufacturer's nutrition label), and meet the nutritional needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of scholars, help mitigate childhood and adolescent beauty, 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.

SCA participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). SCA is committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs that:

- Are accessible to all scholars;
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations.

In addition, all foods and beverages sold to scholars on the school campus during the school day outside of the reimbursable school meal programs will meet the applicable USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, unless an allowable exemption applies under federal or state requirements.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition managers and staff will meet or exceed the hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements set forth in the USDA Professional Standards for Child Nutrition Professionals. These school nutrition personnel will refer to the USDA Professional Standards for School Nutrition website to find training that meets their learning needs.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all scholars throughout the school day. SCA will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.

Celebration and Rewards

SCA will provide information relating to the USDA Smart Snacks in School Nutrition standards as a recommendation for all foods offered at the school including through:

1. Celebrations and parties. SCA will provide parents and teachers with a list of healthy party ideas, including non-food celebration ideas.
2. Classroom snacks brought by parents. SCA will provide parents with a list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards.
3. Rewards and incentives. SCA will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a list of alternative ways to reward children.

Fundraising

SCA will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold through fundraisers on the school campus during the school day.

Any foods used for fundraising that do not meet these USDA guidelines should include a learning component to teach scholars how to make healthy food choices. This includes marketing off-campus events at restaurants or other eating establishments. The Superintendent or designee will make all advisors, club leaders, PTO, and after-school program sponsors aware of this fundraising policy and monitor compliance. Exceptions to this policy may be made with the permission of the Superintendent or their designee.

Marketing

Marketing and advertising of food and beverages will be only of foods that meet the Smart Snacks in school nutrition standards.

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. Scholars and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to scholars and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff, teachers, parents, scholars, and the community.

SCA will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all scholars across the school campus and encourage participation in school meal programs.

Nutrition Promotion Goals:

1. Schools shall promote fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices.
2. The school cafeteria serves as a learning laboratory to support classroom instruction through menu offerings, point-of-sale information, signage, etc.
3. Is part of classroom instruction in subjects such as math, language arts, social studies, and elective subjects;
4. School nutrition staff will be available as a resource to teachers and staff

Nutrition Education

SCA will teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by all scholars. SCA will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Includes enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally-relevant, and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits, and/or school gardens;
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods.

Nutrition Education Goals:

1. All scholars at Scintilla Charter Academy schools have access to a healthy breakfast and lunch that meets school nutrition guidelines.
2. Snacks are appealing and meet the Smart Snack guidelines established by the USDA.
3. Staff who provide nutrition education have appropriate training. Cafeteria managers and assistants complete all mandatory training each school year. School-level staff complete all mandatory training each school year.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks, or physical education) will not be withheld as punishment for any reason. This does not include participation on sports teams that have specific academic requirements.

To the extent practicable, SCA will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to scholars for active use. SCA will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

Physical Activity Goals:

1. Opportunities for physical activities will be incorporated into other subject lessons and after school clubs/sports.
2. Introduction in physical education classes of lifetime sports and activities. Credentialed physical education instructors teach physical education classes
3. Time allotted for physical education is consistent with research, national and state standards
4. Adequate equipment is available for all scholars to participate in physical education/activity

Physical Education

SCA will provide scholars with age-appropriate, sequential physical education consistent with national and state physical education standards. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle, help scholars develop skills to maintain lifelong healthy habits, and incorporate essential health education concepts. The curriculum will support the essential components of physical education.

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

The SCA physical education program will promote scholar physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments and will use criterion-based reporting for each scholar.

Health education will be required in all elementary grades, and SCA will require middle and high school scholars to take and pass at least one health education course.

Recess (Elementary)

All Elementary grades will offer at least 25 minutes of recess on all days during the school year. This policy may be waived on early dismissal or late arrival days. Scholars in grades K-4 participate in both a morning and afternoon recess. Grade 5 has one recess, and scholars in grades 6-8 have a daily outdoor break. If recess is offered before lunch, the school will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms to ensure proper hygiene before eating, and scholars are required to use them. Hand-washing time, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves, will be built into the recess transition period/time frame before scholars enter the cafeteria.

Outdoor recess will be offered when weather permits outdoor play. If the school must hold indoor recess, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines to promote scholars' physical activity to the extent practicable.

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

Classroom Physical Activity Breaks (Elementary and Secondary)

SCA recognizes that scholars are more attentive and ready to learn when given periodic breaks to be physically active or stretch. Thus, scholars will be offered periodic opportunities to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. SCA provides short five-minute breaks to scholars between classroom periods. 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 scholars whenever feasible.

Before and After School Activities

SCA offers scholars opportunities to engage in physical activity before and/or after the school day through various methods.

OTHER ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTE SCHOLAR WELLNESS

SCA will aim to integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria. SCA will

coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition, and other wellness components so that all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work toward the same set of goals and objectives that promote scholar well-being, optimal development, and strong educational outcomes.

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

Other School-Based Activities that Promote School Wellness Goals

1. Provide a clean, safe, enjoyable meal environment for scholars. All food sold/served to scholars is prepared in health-inspected facilities.
2. Scholars are provided adequate time for scholars to enjoy eating healthy foods with friends, scheduled as near to the middle of the school day as possible.

Community Partnerships

SCA will continue its relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, SNAP-Ed providers and coordinators) to support the implementation of this Wellness Policy. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure they align with the Wellness Policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

SCA 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, SCA may use electronic mechanisms (email or displaying notices on the school's website) as well as non-electronic mechanisms (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.

Professional Learning

When feasible, SCA will offer learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school (e.g., increasing the use of kinesthetic teaching approaches or incorporating nutrition lessons into math class). Professional learning will help SCA staff understand the connection between academics and health, and how health and wellness are integrated into ongoing district reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.