



Bella Mente
Montessori Academy

Bella Mente Montessori Academy Wellness Policy

On June 30, 2004, Congress passed Section 204 of Public Law 108-265, of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 establishing a requirement for school districts to develop a local school wellness policy. The “Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010”, which further strengthened the above requirements, was the spark plug for the expansion of Bella Mente Montessori Academy’s Wellness Policy. Some key components to Bella Mente Montessori Academy’s wellness policy now include: (a) engagement of critical stakeholders such as students, parents, teachers, administrators, the school board, food service professionals, health professionals and other interested community members, (b) the link between healthy diet and a student’s ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards in school, (c) nutrition education and promotion, (d) physical education and movement, (e) monitoring and the evaluation of the health wellness policy district wide.

Preamble

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, more high school students should participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and attend daily physical education classes;

Whereas, very few children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the recommendations from MyPlate;

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;

Whereas, community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;



Thus, Bella Mente Montessori Academy is committed to assist schools create environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Bella Mente Montessori Academy has appointed Gladys Espino to coordinate and assess the implementation of a wellness policy in our school.

Therefore, the policy states that:

- The school will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing district-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades will have opportunities, support, and encouragement from teachers/staff to be physically active on a regular basis through recess and/or activity breaks.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition requirements as outlined in *Bulletin 1196*.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity 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 schools will participate in available federal school meal programs including, the School Breakfast Program (SBP), National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
- Schools will provide 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.

Standards for USDA Child Nutrition Programs and School Meals

Our school will:

- Offer a school lunch program with menus that meet all current meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the California Department of Education, Office of School and Community Support. In addition juice will not be served to substitute for fruit or vegetables.
www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/nutrition-standards-school-meals
- Provide school breakfast and snack programs (where approved and applicable) with menus that meet the meal patterns and nutrition standards established by the U. S.



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Department of Agriculture and the California Department of Education, Office of School and Community Support.

- Encourage school staff and families to participate in school meal programs.
- Operate all Child Nutrition Programs with school foodservice staff who are qualified according to current professional standards (*Policies of Operation, Bulletin 1196*).
- Establish food safety as a key component of all school food operations and ensure that the food service permit is current for the Food Service school site.
- Follow State Board of Education policies on competitive foods and extra food sales (refer to *Bulletin 1196*).
- Establish guidelines for all foods available on the school campus during the school day with the objective of promoting health and reducing obesity. (see "Other School Policies.")
- Ensure that all reimbursable school meals meet current USDA nutrition standards.
- Provide all cashless cafeterias to protect the privacy of students who qualify for free or reduced priced meals.

School Policies

Our school will provide:

- Adequate time for breakfast and lunch. After obtaining food, students will have at least 30 minutes to eat lunch.
- Whole grain products that are high in fiber, low in added fats and sugars, and served in appropriate portion sizes consistent with the current USDA standards.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables using healthy food preparation techniques and 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice.
- Nonfat, reduced fat, low-fat, plain and/or flavored milk and yogurt, nonfat, reduced fat and/or low-fat real cheese.
- Nuts, nut butters, seeds, trail mix, and/or soybean snacks.
- Healthy food preparation techniques for lean meat, poultry, and fish.
- School meals accessible to all students with a variety of delivery strategies, such as breakfast in the classroom, grab-and-go meals, or alternate eating sites – where applicable.
- A cafeteria environment conducive to a positive dining experience, with socializing among students and between students and adults; with supervision of eating areas by adults who model proper conduct and voice level; and with adults who model healthy habits by eating with the students.
- Free, safe, unflavored drinking water to promote hydration will be available to all students throughout the school day. The District will make drinking water available where school meals are served during meal times. In addition, students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.



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- Teachers/staff will model physical activity by participating in exercise breaks during class time with their students.

Other School Policies

Our school will:

- Eliminate use of foods as **rewards** for student accomplishment.
- Encourage serving healthy food at school **parties**. Notices shall be sent to parents/guardians either separately or as part of a school newsletter, reminding them of the necessity of providing healthy treats for students and/or encouraging the use of non-food treats for classroom birthday or award celebrations.
- Strongly discourage selling food items of limited nutritional value as **fundraisers**, such as candy, cupcakes, or sugar beverages. The district is in compliance with all federal and state nutrition standards for all foods served on school grounds.
- Strongly encourage nutritious and appealing options (such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, beef jerky, reduced-fat milk, reduced fat-yogurt, reduced-fat cheese, 100% juice and water) whenever foods/beverages are sold or otherwise offered **after school** at sporting and academic events, celebrations, social events, after school care, and other school functions meet Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) standards.

Food Marketing

- School-based marketing should be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion. As such, it is recommended that schools limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals or for foods and beverages sold individually. School-based marketing of brands promoting predominantly low-nutrition foods and beverages is strongly discouraged. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy foods is encouraged.
- Marketing activities that promote healthful behaviors include: vending machine covers promoting water or milk; pricing structures that promote healthy options in vending machines, and sales of fruit for fundraisers and will meet USDA Smart Snack nutrition standards. www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/allfoods_flyers.pdf
- The goal of improving nutritional intake can also be accomplished by applying basic marketing strategies to sales of healthful options. Schools can consider the four P's



when establishing guidelines for foods and beverages served or sold during the school day:

- **Product:** Vendors and companies have increasing numbers of products available—many with a more healthful profile than traditional snack foods and beverages.
- **Placement:** The sales of more nutrient-rich foods and beverages can be increased by placing them in “prime” locations—like at students’ eye level in a vending machine.
- **Price:** Another way to increase the sale of healthful items is to offer them at a lower cost.
- **Promotion:** There are many creative ways to promote healthy options---like offering samples of new healthful products or giving discount coupons during the introductory period.

Nutrition Education

Our school will:

- Promote and implement nutrition education that promotes lifelong healthful eating practices; aligned with state and federal learning objectives and standards.
- Use lessons that are grade-appropriate, behaviorally focused content that is developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant and taught at every grade level TK-8.
- Provide repeated opportunities for students to taste foods that are low in fat, sodium and added sugars and high in vitamins, minerals and fiber;
- Focus on positive aspects of healthful eating behaviors.
- The nutrition education program shall work with staff to integrate hands-on experiences with school gardens and use
- Promote social learning techniques such as role modeling, providing incentives, developing social resistance skills, overcoming barriers to behavioral changes and goal setting. Strive toward hiring qualified, certified health education teachers.
- Provide staff development for teachers.

Physical Education

Both regular physical activity and nutrition mutually contribute to healthy citizens and reduce the incidence of diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, depression, obesity, and other chronic health problems. Federal Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that children and teenagers be physically active for an accumulation of at least 60 minutes daily.



Since children spend the majority of their time at school during weekdays, it is imperative that schools provide students with the means to participate in physical activity.

When examining Physical Education programs, ask the question, “Does the physical education program help every student attain the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for them to lead an active, productive life and maintain a health-enhancing level of physical fitness?” Quality physical education programs include the following components:

1. Emphasizes knowledge and skills that promote a lifetime of physical activity.
2. Is aligned with state standards that define what students should know and be able to do.
3. Keeps students active for most of the class time.
4. Provides many different physical activity choices.
5. Meets needs of **all** students, especially those who are not athletically gifted.
6. Features cooperative, as well as competitive, games.
7. Develops students’ self-confidence and eliminates practices that humiliate students.
8. Assesses students on their progress in reaching goals, not on whether they achieve an absolute standard.
9. Promotes physical activity outside of school.
10. Teaches self-management skills, such as goal-setting and self-monitoring.
11. Actively teaches cooperation, fair play, and responsible participation in physical activity and is an enjoyable experience for students.
12. Focuses, at the high school level, on helping adolescents make the transition to a physically active adult lifestyle.

Our school will:

- Promote and implement quality physical education programs that emphasize and promote participation in lifelong physical activities and reaching a health enhancing level of physical fitness among all students.
- Ensure that students in grades K-6 participate in planned, organized, moderate to vigorous physical activity for a minimum of 30 minutes each school day.
- Strive toward having qualified, certified physical education teachers guide physical activity instruction in all elementary grades as well as in middle and high school physical education classes.



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- Provide staff development on standards implementation for physical education instructors.
- Ensure that adequate safety policies and provisions are in place for physical education programs.
- Strive toward ensuring that adequate equipment is in place to guarantee that all students are able to be active for a minimum of 30 minutes per school day.
- Provide age-appropriate equipment and facilities for implementing quality physical education programs.
- Encourage teachers/staff to model physical activity by participating in exercise breaks during class time with their students to ensure healthy behaviors are learned and lifelong habits are formed.

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