



**Bella Mente  
Academies**

**Bella Mente Academies  
Local School Wellness Policy  
Spring 2019**

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## **I) Introduction Page/Preamble**

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 local education agency's (LEA) to develop a local school wellness policy. The "Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010", which further strengthened the above requirements, was the catalyst for the expansion of Bella Mente Montessori Academy's Wellness Policy and the Health Wellness Committee (HWC). Some key components of Bella Mente Montessori Academy's Wellness Policy now include: (a) engagement of critical stakeholders such as students, parents, teachers, administrators, the Board of Directors, food service professionals, health professionals and other interested community members, (b) the link between healthy diet and students' ability to learn effectively and achieve high standards in school, (c) nutrition education and promotion, (d) physical education and movement, (e) monitoring and evaluating the Health Wellness Policy Charter wide.

The Charter and the Board of Directors acknowledges children need access to healthy foods and opportunities to be physically active. They recognize there is a link between these practices and academic achievement. The Charter and the Board of Directors further recognize the critical role family and school staff play in nurturing the whole child and creating healthy self-esteem and acceptance. Furthermore, the Charter and the Board of Directors recognize that the sharing and enjoyment of food in a peaceful environment is a fundamental human experience and a primary way to nurture and celebrate our cultural diversity. The Board of Directors recognizes very few children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the recommendations from My Plate. Therefore, the Board of Directors recognizes the link between student health and learning and desires to provide a comprehensive program promoting healthy eating and physical activity for all students. The Health Wellness Coordinator shall build a coordinated school health system to support and reinforce healthy lifestyles through health education, physical education, health services, nutrition services, health promotion for staff, a safe and healthy school environment, and parent/guardian and community involvement.

## **II) Implementation and Evaluation**

### **Committee Role and Membership**

The Charter will convene a representative Health Wellness Committee (HWC) to meet at least four times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety

policies and programs, including development, implementation, and periodic review and update of this Charter-level Wellness Policy (heretofore referred to as “Wellness Policy”).

The HWC membership will represent the Charter and include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: parents and caregivers, students, representatives of the school nutrition program, physical education teachers, health education teachers, school health professionals, school Board of Directors, school administrators, health professionals, and the general public. Members will be recruited by sending out an email to the school community, promoting the committee in school newsletters, and posting information about the committee on the school’s web site.

### **Leadership**

The Health Wellness Coordinator will convene the HWC and facilitate the development of and updates to the Wellness Policy, and will ensure the school’s compliance with the policy.

### **Implementation Plan**

The HWC will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this Wellness Policy. The plan will delineate 1)roles, responsibilities, actions, and timelines, 2)information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where, and when, 3)specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, 4)food and beverage marketing, 5)nutrition promotion and education, 6)physical activity, physical education, 7)other school-based activities to promote student wellness. It is recommended that the school use the [Healthy Schools Program online tools](#) to 1)complete a school level assessment based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s School Health Index, 2)create an action plan that fosters implementation, and 3)generate an annual progress report. Principal and/or Health Wellness Coordinator will serve as a liaison with other site groups by reporting wellness updates and share resources at other school site committees such as School Site Council, PTO, ELAC, etc.

This Wellness Policy and the progress reports will be found at: [www.bellamentecharter.org](http://www.bellamentecharter.org) and must be posted in the cafeteria and/or central eating area as well as the front office.

### **Record Keeping**

The Charter will compile and publish an annual report to share information regarding the Wellness Policy and the progress of meeting wellness goals. This annual report will be published around the same time each year in May and will include information regarding:

- The adopted Wellness Policy;
- Documentation demonstrating compliance within community involvement requirements, including, 1) efforts to solicit HWC membership from required stakeholder groups, 2) the participation in the development, implementation, periodic review, and update of Wellness Policy;
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with proper public notification requirements include methods by which the Wellness Policy, annual reports and triennial assessments are made available to the public; and
- Efforts to actively notify families about the availability of Wellness Policy.

### **Triennial Progress Assessments**

At least every three years, the school will evaluate compliance with the Wellness Policy to assess its implementation. This assessment will include:

- The extent to which the Charter is in compliance with the Wellness Policy;
- The extent to which the Charter's Wellness Policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation model Wellness Policy;
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the Charter's Wellness Policy;
- The name, position, title, and contact information of the designated school-level policy leaders;
- The HWC's monitoring school compliance with the Wellness Policy;
- Information on how individuals and the public can get involved with the HWC.

Bella Mente Montessori Academy will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

### **Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications**

The Charter is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the Wellness Policy. The Charter will actively communicate ways in which members of the HWC and others participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the Wellness Policy. The Charter 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. The Charter 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 all families are actively notified regarding the content of, implementation of, and updates to the Wellness Policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. The Charter will ensure communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, they will accomplish this through means similar to those the school uses to communicate other important school information with parents.

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

### **III) Nutrition Education**

The nutrition education integrated in classrooms shall be based on research, consistent with the expectations established in the state's curriculum frameworks and content standards, and designed to build the skills and knowledge that all students need to maintain a healthy lifestyle at every grade level. The Charter will teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by students and provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health.

Nutrition education professional development shall be made available to teachers annually. The HWC shall encourage the Charter to connect nutrition education and promote messages to families including information home regarding healthy snacks and lunches to advocate healthier choices. The HWC will teach media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing.

#### **Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education**

The Charter will include in the health education curriculum the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- The relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Food guidance from [MyPlate](#)
- Reading and using USDA's food labels
- Eating a variety of foods every day and more color variety "Eat a Rainbow"
- Balancing food intake and physical activity

- Eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grain 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
- Accepting body size differences
- Food safety

## **Experiential Learning**

The HWC will support the Charter to establish school wide learning gardens to be used as an outdoor classroom for nutrition, science, other disciplinary core ideas and lessons. Support will include providing resources for integrating experiential learning activities (i.e. planting, harvesting, composting, seed to table, cooking demonstrations, field trips with local farmers, tastings to highlight the local/ regional products) into existing curricula at all grade levels. In this way students' understanding of local food systems, healthy nutrition behaviors, and healthy lifestyle choices are developed and supported.

## **Nutrition Promotion**

The Charter will commit to incorporating Smarter Lunchroom Movement tools and strategies, which are evidence-based, simple, low-cost changes shown to improve student participation in the school meal program while encouraging consumption of whole grains, milk, fruits, vegetables and legumes, and decreasing plate waste.

Nutrition education and promotion positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages and by creating food environments that encourage healthy food choices and participation in the school meal programs.

The Charter will also connect the cafeteria to the classroom by employing nutrition messaging aligned with Smarter Lunchroom Movement (SLM) practices being implemented in the cafeteria. Consistent nutrition messages will be delivered throughout all the school, in the cafeteria, classrooms, and other areas in the school, with posters, signage, artwork, newsletters, verbal announcements, and taste testing opportunities.

SLM techniques will be implemented in cafeterias to connect classrooms to cafeterias and support student selection and consumption of fruits and vegetables.

## **IV) School Meals**

The Charter is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat-free and low-fat milk; low sodium, low saturated fat, and zero grams *trans* fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); while meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to 1) improve the diet and health of school children, 2) mitigate childhood obesity, 3) model healthy eating 4) support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns, 5) support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs. Students will have at least 20 minutes to eat lunch after obtaining food.

The school lunch program will

- 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](http://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. 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 food service staff who are qualified according to current professional standards;
- 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;
- Establish guidelines for all foods available on the school campus during the school day with the objective of promoting health and reducing obesity;
- 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;
- Offer free and Reduced -Price Meals Applications for free/reduced price meals are made available to all families at the beginning of the school year. The application is also available on the Charter website [www.bellamentecharter.org](http://www.bellamentecharter.org) or at the front office;



The Charter will implement at least four of the following five Farm to School activities:

- Local and/or regional products are incorporated into the school meal program;
- Messages about agriculture and nutrition are reinforced throughout the learning environment;
- A school garden program;
- Field trips either to or in-house with local farms;
- Harvest of the Month tastings to highlight local products.

### **Sharing of Food and Beverages**

The Charter strongly discourages students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, due to concerns about allergies and other student dietary restrictions.

### **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\* and throughout every school campus\* (“school campus” and “school day” are defined in the glossary). The Charter will make drinking water available where school meals are served during meal times. In addition, students will be allowed to bring and carry (recommended) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

All water sources and containers will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene standards. Such sources and containers may include drinking fountains, water jugs, hydration stations, water jets, and other methods for delivering drinking water.

### **Competitive Foods and Beverages**

The Charter is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus\* during the school day\* support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (i.e. “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. A summary of the standards and information are available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available at [www.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks](http://www.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks).

### **School- Sponsored Events, Fundraisers, and Birthday Celebrations**

All competitive foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards which includes midnight before, during and up to 30 minutes after the school day ends. The Charter will develop creative campus fundraisers promoting healthy eating and healthier lifestyles (such as walk-a-thons, jump rope for heart, fun runs, etc.) The Charter will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas (such as line leader, teacher's helper for the day). Healthy party ideas can be obtained from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) and from the [USDA](#). For parents lists can be obtained from the list [of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks](#) nutrition standards.

The Charter will communicate these standards annually through printed and online sources.

### **Waste Reduction**

To ensure our cafeteria is part of the students' environmental education of, staff and the school community will reduce waste by means of composting, recycling, and (when applicable) purchase recycled, green or Earth friendlier materials. The USDA provides a guide with tips for staff, students, and parents.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/USDAHelppreventwastedfood.pdf>

## **V) Physical Education/Activity**

The Charter will provide all students tK through 8 with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education activities. Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, physical activity breaks, or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason.

Best practices encourage students to be moderately to vigorously active for at least 50% of class time during most or all physical education class sessions. The Charter will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary. Temporary

exemptions from physical education are limited to students whose medical conditions do not allow inclusion in the general, modified, or adapted physical education program.

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

### **Instruction Requirements**

All elementary students (grades tK-8) in each grade will receive physical education for at least 200 minutes every 10 days throughout the school year. Principal and/or designee will monitor instructional minutes.

Physical education classes will be taught by licensed teachers or by those certified or endorsed to teach physical education.

### **Recess**

The Charter will offer at least **30 minutes of recess** for students in grades tK-6 on all or most days during the school year scheduled prior to lunch if available (*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, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves, will be built into the recess transition period/time frame before students enter the cafeteria.

**Outdoor recess** will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play in accordance to our Inclement Policy. Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

### **Before and After School Activities**

The Charter offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity before and/or after the school day through a variety of methods. The Charter will encourage students to be physically active before and/or after school with The Morning Mile, Fit Kids America, Wellness/ Sustainability Club. The Charter will develop joint-use agreements to make facilities or grounds available for these opportunities.

### **Active Transport**

The Charter will support active transport to and from school, such as walking, biking or skateboarding. The Charter will encourage this behavior by engaging in six *or more* of the activities below; including but not limited to:

- Promotional activities such as participation in International Walk to School Week, National Walk and Bike to School Week, Walk & Bike to School Day
- Secure storage facilities for bicycles and helmets (e.g., shed, cage, fenced area, racks)
- Instruction on walking/bicycling safety provided to students
- Promotion of safe routes program to students, staff, and parents via newsletters, websites, local newspaper
- The use of crosswalks exist on streets leading to and from schools
- Data recording the number of children walking and/or biking to and from school
- Designation of safe or preferred routes to school

## **VI) Health and Wellness Services**

The Charter recognizes that good health among its staff and school community helps to improve student attendance, fosters a more cohesive school culture and ultimately improves student achievement.

### **Health Assessments**

Fully qualified and credentialed school personnel will provide student health assessments during school hours, including tests for vision and hearing. When these screenings identify health or wellness issues, school personnel shall make the appropriate medical, psychological, social service, or dental referral for students.

### **Community/Staff Health Engagement**

The Charter will promote to parents/caregivers, families, staff and the general community (the benefits of, and approaches for, healthy eating and physical activity) throughout the school year. Families will be invited to participate in school-sponsored physical activity programs and will receive information about health promotion efforts. School-sponsored events will feature healthy food and beverage choices consistently including access to water. The Charter will use electronic mechanisms (such as email or displaying notices on the charter's website), as well as non-electronic mechanisms (such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents),

to ensure 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 Charter will have a staff wellness subcommittee to focus on staff wellness issues, identify and disseminate wellness resources, and perform other functions supporting staff wellness, in collaboration with human resources staff. The Charter will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors (ie: Bella Boot Camp for staff). The plan shall be based on input solicited from school staff and overseen by the Charter's Health Wellness Coordinator.

### **Staff Modeling**

Staff are encouraged to model healthy nutrition throughout the school day and while on site. Staff will model physical activity whenever possible by participating alongside students during recess, physical education, garden, or when incorporating physical activity into lesson plans.

### **Professional Development and Training**

When feasible, the Charter will offer annual professional development 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 development will help Charter staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing Charter reform or academic improvement plans/efforts. School staff will also be notified and trained (as allowed by law) in the use of any necessary medications that students are authorized to carry and/or use.

## **VII) Marketing**

### **Marketing**

School-based marketing will be consistent with nutrition education and health promotion items identified in the Wellness Policy. The Charter prohibits the marketing and advertising of non-nutritious foods and beverages through signage, vending machine fronts, logos, scoreboards/ signboards, school supplies, advertisements in school publications, coupon or incentive programs, or other means.

Healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat or fat-free dairy products will be promoted through garden projects, nutrition science lab, and taste testings such as Harvest of the Month. They will also meet Smart Snack Guidelines and follow resources from Smarter Lunchrooms Movement.

**VIII) Appendix A: Charter Contacts**

Name	Title	Email Address
Erin Feeley	Executive Director	Efeeley@bellamentecharter.org
Carrie McCraw	Principal	Cmccraw@bellamentecharter.org
Gladys Espino	Coordinator of Support Services	Gespino@bellamentecharter.org
Hank Stelzl	Coordinator of Health & Wellness	Hstelzl@bellamentecharter.org

## **IX) Appendix B: References and Glossary**

1. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/cf/documents/healthfw.pdf>
2. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/healthstandmar08.pdf>
3. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/pestandards.pdf>
4. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/nfbmpbreakfast.asp>
5. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/newfbmplunch.asp>
6. [https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/sfsp/SFSP\\_Admin\\_Guide\\_Sept2016.pdf](https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/sfsp/SFSP_Admin_Guide_Sept2016.pdf)
7. <https://www.smarterlunchrooms.org/scorecard-tools/smarter-lunchrooms-strategies>
8. <https://healthymeals.fns.usda.gov/menu-planning-0>
9. [http://www.californiaprojectlean.org/doc.asp?id=168&parentid=20#Fact\\_Sheets](http://www.californiaprojectlean.org/doc.asp?id=168&parentid=20#Fact_Sheets)

### **Glossary**

**Extended School Day** - time during before and after school activities that include clubs, intramural sports, band and choir practice, drama rehearsals, etc.

**School Campus** - areas that are owned or leased by the school and used at any time for school-related activities such as the school building or on the school campus, including on the outside of the school building, school buses or other vehicles used to transport students, athletic fields, and stadiums (e.g. on scoreboards, coolers, cups, and water bottles), or parking lots.

**School Day** - midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

**Triennial** – recurring every three years.



## **X) USDA Nondiscrimination Statement**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877 - 8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD - 3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632 - 9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250 - 9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690 - 7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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