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Meridian Public Charter School

**Local Wellness Policy**

**SY 2016 - 2021**

This Local Wellness Policy (LWP) outlines the LEA's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. This policy applies to all students, staff and schools in the Meridian Public Charter School. Specific measureable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

**Local Wellness Committee**

**Committee Role and Membership**

Meridian Public Charter School will establish a Local Wellness Committee that meets at least two times per year to develop goals for and oversee implementation of school health and safety policies/programs, including periodic reviews and updates of this LWP.

The Local Wellness Committee will represent all school levels (elementary and secondary schools) and include, but not be limited to: parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program; physical education teachers; health education teachers; school health professionals and mental health and social services staff; school administrators; health professionals; and the public. When possible, membership will also include Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education coordinators (SNAP-Ed).

**Leadership**

Each school will designate a school wellness policy coordinator, who will ensure compliance with the policy.

The designated official for oversight is the Business Manager, Michael Russell

| Name            | Title / Relationship to the School or District | Email address             | Role on Committee   |
|-----------------|--|---------------------------|---|
| Gary Sockwell   | Dean of Students                               | gsockwell@meridian-dc.org | Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation |
| Brittany Thomas | Physical Education Teacher                     | bthomas@meridian-dc.org   | Assists in the implementation of the nutritional and            |

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|                  |                             |  | health educational program for students                                  |
| Lavetta Ray      | Food Services Manager       | <a href="mailto:lrav@meridian-dc.org">lrav@meridian-dc.org</a>           | Assist in overseeing the nutritional implementation of the wellness plan |
| Michael Russell  | Director of Operations      | <a href="mailto:mrussell@meridian-dc.org">mrussell@meridian-dc.org</a>   | Assist with advertisement of wellness plan and updated plan as needed    |
| Chaunti Sockwell | Business Operations Manager | <a href="mailto:csockwell@meridian-dc.org">csockwell@meridian-dc.org</a> | Assist with soliciting community input and school-wide awareness of plan |

### **Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement**

#### **Implementation Plan**

All Meridian Public Charter School schools will develop and maintain an implementation plan for implementing this LWP. This plan will delineate the roles, responsibilities, actions and timelines specific to each school; and include information about who will be responsible to making 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 student wellness.

Meridian Public Charter School will use a variety of tools (see list below) to complete school-level assessments of implementation of this plan; based on the results; Meridian Public Charter School will create an action plan, implement the plan, and generate an annual report. Meridian Public Charter School will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of this LWP at the Meridian Public Charter School’s main office and with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education.

Documentation maintained in these locations will include but is not be limited to:

- this written LWP;

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- documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public;
  - documentation of efforts to review and update the LWP; including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods the LEA uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the Local Wellness Committee;
  - documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements;
  - the most recent assessment on the implementation of the LWP; and
  - assessment documents will be made available to the public.

Each school in the Meridian Public Charter School will actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates to the policy and implementation status. The school will make this information available via the school website <https://www.mpcs-dc.org> and through Meridian Public Charter School-wide communications. This will include a summary of the Meridian Public Charter School's events or activities related to wellness policy implementation. Annually, the Meridian Public Charter School also will publicize the name and contact information of the school officials leading and coordinating the Local Wellness Committee, as well as information on how the public can get involved with the Committee.

### Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, Meridian Public Charter School will conduct a Triennial Progress Assessment and develop a report that reviews each Meridian Public Charter School schools' compliance with this LWP. This assessment and report will include a full description of the progress made in attaining the goals of Meridian Public Charter School's LWP.

The positions/persons responsible for managing the triennial assessment and report is:

Employee: Gary Sockwell

Title: Physical Education Teacher

Email: [gsockwell@meridian-dc.org](mailto:gsockwell@meridian-dc.org)

Employee: Marcus Townsend

Title: Assistant Principal

Email: [mtownsend@meridian-dc.org](mailto:mtownsend@meridian-dc.org)

The above referenced individual will monitor Meridian Public Charter School schools' compliance with this LWP and develop the triennial progress reports by utilizing, among other tools, the annual LEA self-evaluations described in the above section. Meridian Public Charter School schools will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

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### **Establishing a Plan to Measure the Impact and Implementation of the Local Wellness Policy**

Meridian Public Charter School will evaluate compliance and effectiveness of this LWP using existing data collection tools, such as, but not limited to:

- School Health Index;
- OSSE Health and Physical Education student assessments;
- DC Healthy Schools Act School Health Profiles;
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention School Health Profiles;
- USDA triennial administrative review.

### **Revisions and Updating the Local Wellness Policy**

**This LWP will be assessed and updated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment discussed above.** The Local Wellness Committee will update or modify this LWP based on the results of Meridian Public Charter School's annual self-assessment, the USDA triennial administrative review, and on other variables, including if/when Meridian Public Charter School's health priorities change; the community's health needs change; the wellness goals are met; new health science arises, new technology emerges; and new federal or state guidance/standards are issued.

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

All Meridian Public Charter School schools are committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the LWP. All Meridian Public Charter School schools will actively communicate ways in which representatives of the Local Wellness Committee and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the LWP through a variety of means appropriate for Meridian Public Charter School. All Meridian Public Charter School schools also will 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. All Meridian Public Charter School schools will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to this LWP annually, at a minimum. All Meridian Public Charter School schools will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports. Additionally, Meridian Public Charter School will disseminate this LWP to parents through posting it in the school office, on the school website, and through any parent-teacher organizations.

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## **Nutrition**

All Meridian Public Charter School schools are committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein and fat-free or low-fat dairy, that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, have zero grams trans-fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification), and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of students, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating habits to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns, and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

Meridian Public Charter School is committed to offering school meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and other supplemental programs, that:

- are accessible to all students;
- are appealing and attractive to students;
- are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local and federal statutes and regulations;
- ensure all qualified students will become eligible for free lunch;
- schools will provide at least 30 minutes for students to eat lunch and sufficient time during the lunch period for every student to pass through the service line;
- schools will operate a Universal "Free for All" School Breakfast Program in the cafeteria; and
- promote healthy food and beverage choices by using Smarter Lunchroom techniques, such as the following:
  - whole fruit options offered in attractive, accessible settings;
  - sliced or cut fruit offered, especially for age-appropriate students;
  - alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, vegetarian options, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas;
  - placing white milk at the front of the coolers; and
  - School meals are administered by a team of child nutrition professionals.]

Meridian Public Charter School will strive to implement the following Farm to School activities:

- Local and/or regional products are incorporated into the school meal program;]

## **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.

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## Water

To promote hydration, free, potable drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day and throughout every school campus. Meridian Public Charter School will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. Additionally, Meridian Public Charter School will also:

- All water sources and container will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene and health safety standards.]

## Competitive Foods and Beverages

Meridian Public Charter School 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 (e.g., “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.

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards and the DC Healthy Schools Act 2010.

## Rewards

Meridian Public Charter School schools will not use foods or beverages as rewards, incentives, or prizes for academic performance or good behavior that do not meet the nutritional requirements above.

## Celebrations

Schools should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (above). The district will disseminate a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers.

All items must be provided in its original container from the licensed cater vendor or store brought package.

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### **Third-Party Vendors**

Meridian Public Charter School schools will not permit third-party vendors to sell foods or beverages of any kind to students on school property from midnight on the day school begins to 90 minutes after the school day ends, in accordance with Healthy Schools Act and USDA Smart Snacks Standards.

### **Fundraising**

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the school campus during the school day. Meridian Public Charter School will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas including the following: walk-a-thons, Jump Rope for Heart, and dance-a-thons. Fundraising during and outside school hours will sell only non-food items or foods and beverages that meet or exceed the Smart Snacks nutrition standards.

### **Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools**

Meridian Public Charter School is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Meridian Public Charter School strives to teach students how to make informed choices about nutrition, health and physical activity. It is Meridian Public Charter School's intent to protect and promote students' health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with this LWP.

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Food and beverage marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage marketing often includes an oral, written, or graphic statements made for the purpose of promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product. This term includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Brand names, trademarks, logos or tags, except when placed on a physically present food or beverage product or its container;
- Displays, such as on vending machine exteriors;
- Corporate brand, logo, name or trademark on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans and other food service equipment; as well as on posters, book covers, pupil assignment books or school supplies displayed, distributed, offered or sold by Meridian Public Charter School;
- Advertisements in school publications or school mailings; and

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- Free product samples, taste tests or coupons of a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product.

As Meridian Public Charter School's school nutrition services, athletics department, and Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by this LWP.

### **Nutrition Promotion**

All Meridian Public Charter School schools will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through at least:

- implementing 10 or more evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#); and
- ensuring 100 percent of foods and beverages promoted to students meet the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards. Additional promotion techniques that Meridian Public Charter School schools may use are available [here](#).

### **Ensuring Quality Nutrition Education, Health Education and Physical Education**

Meridian Public Charter School aims to provide age-appropriate and culturally sensitive instruction in nutrition, health and physical education that help students develop the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to enjoy healthy eating habits and a physically active lifestyle.

### **Nutrition Education**

Meridian Public Charter School will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- is part of not only health education classes, but also integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences and elective subjects;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits and school gardens;

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- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products and healthy food preparation methods;
  - emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
  - links with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods and nutrition-related community services;
  - teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing;
  - includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff; and
  - In elementary schools, nutrition education will be offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based health education curriculum that meets state and national standards.

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

Meridian Public Charter School will include in the health education curriculum the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- Food safety
- Food guidance from MyPlate
- Eating a variety of foods every day

#### **Health Education**

Meridian Public Charter School is dedicated to providing formal, structured health education, consisting of planned learning experiences that provide the opportunity to acquire information and the skills students need to make quality health decisions. As such, Meridian Public Charter School will provide students a comprehensive school health education that address a variety of topics such as alcohol and other drug use and abuse, healthy eating/nutrition, mental and emotional health, personal health and wellness, physical activity, safety and injury prevention, sexual health, tobacco use, and violence prevention. Health education curricula and instruction should address the DC Health Education Standards and incorporate the characteristics of an effective health education curriculum. Meridian Public Charter School will provide health education that:

- is offered at least 75 minutes per week at each grade level, K-8, as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- is incorporated into classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- incorporates an age-appropriate sequential health education curriculum that is consistent with District and national standards for health education;

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- incorporates active learning strategies and activities that students find enjoyable and personally relevant;
  - incorporates opportunities for students to practice or rehearse the skills needed to maintain and improve their health;
  - incorporates a variety of culturally-appropriate activities and examples that reflect the community's cultural diversity;
  - incorporates assignments or projects that encourage students to have interactions with family members and community organizations;
  - requires the health instructors to participate at least once a year in professional development in health education; and
  - requires professional development for all teachers in classroom management techniques in the past two years.

Additionally, in an effort to ensure reinforcement of health messages that are relevant for students and meet community needs, Meridian Public Charter School will base its health education program, at least in part, on the results of the Health and Physical Education Assessment and in collaboration with the community. Meridian Public Charter School will also seek to imbed health education as part of student visits with the school nurse, through posters or public service announcements, and through conversations with family and peers.

### **Improving Environmental Sustainability**

Meridian Public Charter School will seek to improve its environmental sustainability and engage in sustainable agriculture practices through:

- contracting with food service vendors that utilize locally grown, locally processed and unprocessed foods from growers engaged in sustainable agriculture practices; and
- school wide recycling programs.

### **Physical Education and Physical Activity**

Meridian Public Charter School acknowledges the positive benefits of physical activity for student health and academic achievement. It is the goal of Meridian Public Charter School that students engage in the recommended 60 minutes per day of physical activity. Additionally, recognizing that physical education is a crucial and integral part of a child's education, we will provide opportunities to ensure that students engage in healthful levels of vigorous physical activity to promote and develop the students' physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being.

The components of Meridian Public Charter School's physical education program shall include a variety of kinesthetic activities, including team, individual, and cooperative sports and physical activities, as well as aesthetic movement forms, such as [state activities the Meridian Public Charter School provides, such

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as dance, yoga or the martial arts, as well as, goals to increase physical activity for students to satisfy the Healthy Schools Act requirement.

Students shall be given opportunities for physical activity through a range of before-and/or after-school programs including, but not limited to athletics, intramurals and other physical activities. Meridian Public Charter School will ensure that:

- students in grades K-5 receive at least 150 minutes per week of physical education, and students in grades 6-8 receive at least 225 minutes per week of physical education;
- physical education teachers shall develop and implement a curriculum that connects and demonstrates the interrelationship between physical activity, good nutrition, and health;
- 50 percent of physical education class time is devoted to actual physical activity;
- suitably adapted physical activity shall be provided as part of the individualized education plan (IEP) developed for students with disabilities;
- physical education staff shall appropriately limit the amount or type of physical exercise required of students during air pollution episodes, excessively hot weather, or other inclement conditions; and
- physical activity is neither required nor withheld as punishment.

#### **Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) Physical Activity Recommendations:**

Meridian Public Charter School Pre-K shall ensure that students receive 60-90 minutes of active play daily. These minutes shall consist of a combination of adult-led/structured active play and child-initiated/unstructured active play. Meridian Public Charter School will seek to offer active play outdoors, weather permitting. Meridian Public Charter School will ensure that:

- these active play minutes shall be achieved through recess, active transitions (marching, hopping, etc.), and classroom games that involve physical movement;
- recess shall be at least 60 minutes daily and scheduled in more than one block of time (e.g., three 20-minute sessions, two 30-minute sessions);
- as with physical education minutes, OSSE shall report to the mayor, DC Council, and Healthy Youth and School Commission (HYSC) annually regarding compliance with physical activity minutes for pre-K children in public and charter schools;
- 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.