

## **Talmudical Academy Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition**

### **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, only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with the five main recommendations from the Food Guide Pyramid;

Whereas, school districts around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints; and

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

Thus, Talmudical Academy of Baltimore is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of the Talmudical Academy of Baltimore that:

- The school district will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in nursery through 12<sup>th</sup> grade will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served by school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- 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, we will participate in the National School Lunch Program.
- 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.

## **TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:**

### **I. School Health Council**

The Administration and Volunteer Coordinators (hereby known as School Health Council) will create, strengthen, or work to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The council also will serve as the resource to the school for implementing those policies. (A school health council consists of a group of individuals representing the school and community, and should include parents, students, members of the school board, school administrators, teachers, health professionals, and members of the public.)

### **II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Sold and Served on Campus**

#### **School Meals**

Meals served through the National School Lunch Program will:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations (i.e. USDA regulations);
- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables; and
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy alternatives (to be defined by USDA).

**Free and Reduced-priced Meals.** Talmudical Academy of Baltimore will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.

**Meal Times and Scheduling.** Talmudical Academy of Baltimore:

- will provide students with at least 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- should schedule meal periods at appropriate times, *e.g.*, lunch should be scheduled between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.;
- should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities; and
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.

**Qualifications of School Food Service Staff.** Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. As part of the school's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in school. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for child nutrition directors, school nutrition managers, and cafeteria workers, according to their levels of responsibility.

**Sharing of Foods and Beverages.** Schools should discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

**Fundraising Activities.** To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities will try not to involve food for fundraisers. The school will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity. The school will make available a list of ideas for acceptable fundraising activities.

**Snacks.** Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations. The school will disseminate a list of healthful snack items to teachers and parents.

**Rewards.** The school will try not use foods or beverages, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

### **III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion**

**Nutrition Education and Promotion.** Talmudical Academy of Baltimore aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. The school should provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is offered at each grade level 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 part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health enhancing nutrition practices; and
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);

**Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting.** For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (*i.e.*, at least 60 minutes per day) and

for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class.

Toward that end:

- classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;
- opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

**Communications with Parents.** Talmudical Academy of Baltimore will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children.

#### **IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education**

**Daily Physical Education (P.E.) Nursery-8<sup>th</sup> grade.** All students in grades nursery-12<sup>th</sup> grade, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive weekly structured physical education for the entire school year. All physical education will be taught by a certified physical education teacher. Nursery students get 25 minutes of P.E. every other week, elementary students get 30 minutes of P.E. every week and middle school students get P.E. 45 minutes every week.

**Daily Recess.** All elementary school students have 45 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment. The school should discourage extended periods (*i.e.*, periods of two or more hours) of inactivity. When activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, make it necessary for students to remain indoors for long periods of time, schools should give students periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active. The middle and high school students get 15 minutes of recess twice a day.

**Physical Activity and Punishment.** Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (*e.g.*, running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (*e.g.*, recess, physical education) as punishment.

#### **V. Monitoring and Policy Review**

**Monitoring.** The designee will ensure compliance with established school nutrition and physical activity wellness policies. The designee will ensure compliance with those policies in his/her school and will report on the school's compliance to the school district superintendent or designee. School food service staff will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the School Health Council. In addition, the school will report on the most recent USDA School Meals Initiative (SMI) review findings and any resulting changes.

**Policy Review.** To help with the initial development of the school's wellness policies, the school will conduct a baseline assessment of the school's existing nutrition and physical activity environments and policies. The results of the school assessments will be compiled to identify and prioritize needs. Assessments will be repeated every three years to help review policy compliance, assess progress, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, the school will review our nutrition and physical activity policies; provision of an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity; and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. The school will, as necessary, revise the wellness policies and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.