ELIJAH HOUSE ACADEMY
becoming

2024/25 Wellness Policy

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Preamble

Elijah House Academy (hereto referred to as EHA) is committed to the optimal development of every student. EHA believes that for students 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 two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during, and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. 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 students. In addition, students 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.

This policy outlines EHA'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.

Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students at EHA have access to healthy foods throughout the school day in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active during school.
- EHA engages in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student 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 EHA in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- EHA establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all students and staff of Elijah House Academy.

I. School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

EHA has convened a committee (hereto referred to as the Wellness Committee) that plans to meet at least four times a year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation, and periodic review and update of this wellness policy (heretofore referred as "wellness policy").

The Wellness Committee membership will represent lower and middle schools and include but not be limited to: parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program ,physical education teachers; health education teachers; and other interested community members.

Leadership

The Director of Operations or Wellness Policy Coordinator will convene the Wellness Committee and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and will ensure EHA's compliance with the policy.

Name	**Title**	**Email address**	**Role**
Andre Coetzee	Director of Operations	amcoetzee@elijahhouseacademy.org	wellness policy coordinator, other duties tbd
Alexandra Rehbein	Food Service Director	amrehbein@elijahhouseacademy.org	assists coordinator in developing policy, ensures nutrition standards are met, other duties tbd
Tonya Sample	Athletic Director	tdsample@elijahhouseacademy.org	ensures physical education curriculum is met, other tbd
Tanikka Wynn	Parent, substitute teacher and Cheer Coach	tchwynn@elijahhouseacademy.org	oversees physical activity, sports curriculum, student absenteeism, other tbd

II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

EHA will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. EHA will use online tools such as Alliance for a Healthier Generation, to complete a school level assessment based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's School Health Index, create an action plan that fosters implementation, and generate an annual progress report.

This wellness policy and the progress reports will be made available.

Recordkeeping

EHA will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy at EHA's front office. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation of annual policy progress reports.
- Documentation of the triennial assessment* of the policy.
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with public notification requirements, including: (1) Methods by which the wellness policy, annual progress reports, and triennial assessments are made available to the public; and (2) Efforts to actively notify families about the availability of wellness policy.

Annual Progress Reports

EHA will compile and publish an annual report to share basic information about the wellness policy and report on the progress in meeting wellness goals. This annual report will be published around June of each year. This report will include, but is not limited to:

- How the public can receive/access a copy of the wellness policy;
- A description of progress meeting the wellness policy goals;
- The name, position title, and contact information of the designated District policy leader(s) identified in Section I; and
- Information on how individuals and the public can get involved with the Wellness Committee.

The annual report will be available in English.

EHA will actively notify households/families of the availability of the annual report.

The Wellness Committee will establish and monitor goals and objectives specific and appropriate for lower and middle school.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, EHA will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to which EHA's wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of EHA's wellness policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is **Andre Coetzee, Director of Operations, amcoetzee@elijahhouseacademy.org**

Elijah House Academy will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The Wellness Committee will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual progress reports and triennial assessments, and/or as EHA's priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and 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 Communications

EHA is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. EHA will actively 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. EHA will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards and the availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply. EHA will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on EHA's website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms such as newsletters to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. EHA will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that EHA is communicating other important school information with parents.

EHA will actively notify the community about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. EHA will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

III. **Nutrition**

School Meals

EHA is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and zero grams *trans* fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meet the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, 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.

Elijah House Academy participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). EHA is committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs that:

- Are accessible to all students;
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (EHA offers reimbursable school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards.)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using at the following: https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/nutrition/schoolnutrition.htm
  - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students
  - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal
  - Alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas
  - Student artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers, and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements. These school nutrition personnel will refer to https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/professional-standards 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. EHA 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.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

EHA is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages as part of the NSLP and SBP programs available to students on the school campus* during the school day* support healthy eating. *All food and beverages sold outside of the school meal programs shall meet the standards established in USDA's Nutrition Standards for Smart Snacks rule (*https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/tools-schools-focusing-smart-snacks). *The school day is defined by USDA as the period from midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.* The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available at https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/guide-smart-snacks-school

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered on the school campus are encouraged to meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards including through:

1. Celebrations and parties. EHA will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas. Healthy party ideas from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and from the USDA.
2. Classroom snacks brought by parents. Following is a link to approved Smart Snacks: https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1696351430/sdcoenet/kw7hxulwesnyee4oeyna/FoodGuidelinesandStudentWellnessPolicy_1.pdf
3. The Smart Snack calculator tool can be found here: https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/calculator/
4. Rewards and incentives. EHA will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a list of alternative ways to reward children. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

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*. EHA will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas [*examples from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and the USDA*].

EHA will encourage non-food fundraisers and promote physical activity such as walk-a-thons, jump rope for heart, fun runs, etc.

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

EHA 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 healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using https://schoolnutrition.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Fall2018-Impact-of-Smarter-Lunchroom-Strategies-Review-of-Literature.pdf and
- Promoting foods and beverages that meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Nutrition Education

EHA aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. EHA 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;
- Include enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits, and school gardens;

- Promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- Link with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- Teach media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and
- Include nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

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

- The relationship between healthy eating and personal health
- Food guidance from MyPlate
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- 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
- Accepting body size differences
- Food safety
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Reducing sodium intake
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior
- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior

USDA's Team Nutrition provides free nutrition education and promotion materials, including standards-based nutrition education curricula and lesson plans, posters, interactive games, menu graphics, and more.

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

EHA 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. EHA strives to teach students how to make informed choices about nutrition, health, and physical activity. These efforts will be weakened if students are subjected to advertising on EHA property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information EHA is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of EHA to protect and promote student's health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with EHA's wellness policy.

Schools will restrict food and beverage marketing or advertising to only those foods and beverages that meet the USDA's Smart Snacks rule.

Food advertising and marketing is defined as an oral, written, or graphic statement 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 school equipment, such as marquees, message boards, scoreboards, or backboards (Note: immediate replacement of these items are not required; however, districts will consider replacing or updating scoreboards or other durable equipment over time so that decisions about the replacement include compliance with the marketing policy.)
- 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 EHA.
- Advertisements in school publications or school mailings.
- Free product samples, taste tests, or coupons of a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product.

IV. **Physical Activity**

Children and adolescents should participate in 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive, school-based physical activity program (CSPAP) that includes these components: physical education, recess, classroom-based physical activity, walk and bicycle to school, and out-of-school time activities and EHA is committed to providing these opportunities. EHA will ensure that these varied opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education (addressed in "Physical Education" subsection).

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. EHA will provide teachers and other school staff with a list of ideas for alternative ways to discipline students.

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

Physical Education

EHA will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts (discussed in the "*Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education*" subsection).

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

All District **elementary students** in each grade will receive physical education for at least 60-89 minutes per week throughout the school year.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

EHA will include in the health education curriculum the following essential topics on physical activity:

- The physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- Health-related fitness, that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- Differences between physical activity, exercise, and fitness
- Phases of an exercise session, that is, warm up, workout, and cool down
- Overcoming barriers to physical activity
- Decreasing sedentary activities, such as TV watching
- Opportunities for physical activity in the community
- Preventing injury during physical activity
- Weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia, and sunburn while being physically active
- How much physical activity is enough, that is, determining frequency, intensity, time, and type of physical activity promoted
- Monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan
- Social influences on physical activity, including media, family, peers, and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness
- How to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity

Recess (Lower School)

All lower school students will be offered at least **20 minutes of recess** on all or most days during the school year. 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 time, 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 the event that the school or district must conduct **indoor recess,** teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable. Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active, and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Physical Activity Breaks

EHA recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered **periodic opportunities** to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. EHA recommends teachers provide short (3-5 minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom time. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for physical education class, recess, and class transition periods.

EHA will provide resources and links to resources, tools, and technology with ideas for physical activity breaks. Resources and ideas are available through the USDA.

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.

EHA will support classroom teachers incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects by providing annual professional development opportunities and resources, including information on leading activities, activity options, as well as making available background material on the connections between learning and movement.

Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Before and After School Activities

EHA encourages students to participate in physical activity either before and/or after the school day (or both) through a variety of methods. EHA offers an after school sports program available to middle school students.

Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

EHA will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues, and physical activity facilities. EHA will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition, and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development, and strong educational outcomes.

EHA coordinates content across curricular areas that promote student health, such as teaching nutrition concepts in mathematics, with consultation provided by EHA's curriculum experts.

Community Health Promotion and Engagement

EHA will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating. 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**,** EHA will use electronic mechanisms (such as email), 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, EHA will offer annual professional 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 staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

Glossary:

Extended School Day - time during before and after school activities that includes 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.