

EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

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“Leaders Soaring to Excellence”

WELLNESS POLICY

2025-2026

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A fundamental mission of the Excellence in Leadership Academy is to encourage healthy behaviors among its students, staff, administration, parents, and Board of Directors. This especially includes providing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become healthy and productive adults. Therefore, the Excellence in Leadership Academy promotes a healthy school environment by supporting wellness, good nutrition, and regular physical activity as a part of the total learning experience. Our school will contribute to the basic good health status of our children by facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition, physical activity, adequate rest, and stress reducing practices. Through these endeavors, we expect to increase the students' readiness to learn, reduce absenteeism, improve physical fitness, and improve mental health.

Excellence in Leadership Academy Wellness Committee

A school-wide wellness committee will monitor the implementation of the school's policy, evaluate policy progress, serve as a resource to school sites, and revise the policy as necessary. The committee will meet annually with committee membership as follows:

- Board of Director Member
- Administrative Representative
- Parent Representative
- Physical/Health Education Teacher
- Staff Representative
- School Food Service Coordinator
- Community Wellness Professional

Physical Activity

Excellence in Leadership Academy recognizes that physical activity plays a critical role in a child's overall wellness, alertness, and ability to learn. The school will promote a healthy environment where children participate in regular physical activity as a part of the total learning environment. Efforts to promote and incorporate good physical-activity opportunities into children's lives are the shared responsibility of all school employees, parents/guardians, and the community.

Implementation

The school will ensure that every student Pre-K through 4th grade receives regular, age-appropriate physical education instruction.

- All physical education classes should be taught by certified physical education teachers.
- Schools should provide daily recess that encourages physical activity. Teachers are encouraged not to withhold recess for academic or classroom disciplinary reasons. If withholding recess is used, it should not be exercised for more than one recess on a given day. Elementary students are expected to go outside (weather permitting) for recess. Administrators have the right to withhold recess for safety reasons if the child is posing a threat to himself or others.
- Schools will provide information to parents that will help them promote proper sleep habits and physical activity into their children's lives. Information should also be provided on alternatives to excess television and video/computer games.

Curriculum

In Physical Education, students in grades Kindergarten through 4th grade acquire the knowledge and skills for movement that provide the foundation for enjoyment, continued social development through physical activity, and access to a physically-active lifestyle. The student exhibits a physically-active lifestyle and understands the relationship between physical activity and health throughout the lifespan. Identifying the types of activities that provide them with enjoyment and challenge and that will encourage them to be physically active throughout life is reinforced during instruction in these grades.

Physical Education Curriculum

The physical education curriculum teaches children the importance of physical exercise. Classes expose students to a wide range of physical activities providing students with the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills to be physically active for life. The elementary grades curriculum addresses the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Physical Education. Students receive instruction in the five health-related components of fitness: cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition, which will include information about proper diet and healthy eating habits.

Knowledge and Skills – Physical Education

The knowledge and skills for physical education standards for grades Kindergarten through 4th grade include:

- Movement Form
- Motor Skills
- Physically-active lifestyle
- Social Development

Health Education

In health education, students acquire the health information and skills necessary to become healthy adults and learn about behaviors in which they should and should not participate. To achieve that goal, students will understand the following: students should first seek guidance in the area of health from their parents; personal behaviors can increase or reduce health risks

throughout the lifespan; health is influenced by a variety of factors; students can recognize and utilize health information and products; and personal/interpersonal skills are needed to promote individual, family, and community health.

In school, students learn about health behaviors that will safeguard their health as well as information related to understanding puberty and the reproductive process. Students are taught about factors in their environment that impact, not only their health and the health of their families, but the health of their communities as well. School students learn to refine their critical-thinking skills to avoid unsafe situations, analyze health information and products, and maintain healthy relationships. Students begin to investigate health in the broader context of community

Knowledge and Skills - Health Curriculum

- Personal Health
- Health Behaviors
- Influencing Factors
- Personal/Interpersonal Skills

Nutrition Education

The Excellence in Leadership Academy addresses nutrition in Pre-K through 4th grade. All instructional staff will be encouraged to integrate nutritional themes into daily lessons when appropriate. The health benefits of good nutrition should be emphasized. These nutritional themes include but are not limited to:

Knowledge of food guide pyramid	Food labels
Healthy heart choices	Sources and variety of foods
Weight problems	Major nutrients
Guide to a healthy diet	Multicultural influences
Diet and disease	Serving sizes/portions
Understanding calories	Proper sanitation
Healthy snacks	Identify and limit junk food
Food allergies/sensitivities	Eating Disorders and Fad dieting

Alcohol, Drug, and Tobacco Education

The school supports laws that make student use of alcohol, drug and tobacco illegal. The school recognizes the fact that educating children on the negative effects of these substances is our best contribution to their future wellness. Federal and school funding for AODA issues will be used to support curriculum, materials, and activities that promote the abstinence of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. The school has existing school board policies that address these issues.

Safety Education

Safety education is integrated into the curriculum. The school establishes rules and regulations to minimize accidents in and around school property.

Parent Wellness Education

Wellness education will be provided to parents beginning of each school year. The goal is to continue to educate parents throughout all the school levels. Wellness education may be provided in the form of handouts, postings on the school website, wellness fairs, or presentations that focus on nutritional value and healthy lifestyles.

The school will utilize the resources of other community health organizations to enhance parent education.

Emotional Wellness

The Excellence in Leadership Academy will make efforts to educate staff and students on emotional wellness issues. Elementary school students will receive regular guidance classroom presentations where mental and emotional wellness issues are discussed.

Student Nutrition

Students are taught about good nutrition and the value of healthy food choices. The Board of Directors, administrators, staff, parents, and students are encouraged to promote healthy lifestyle principles, replacing unhealthy food offerings with healthy ones.

Hot Lunch Program

The Excellence in Leadership Academy Hot Lunch Program will continue to adhere to the National School Lunch Program and follow the U.S. Government Nutritional Standards. Food Service will limit the use of dyes, sulfites, MSG, and other additives that may affect food allergies in children.

The Hot Lunch Program will also strive to:

- Provide a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables
- Provide whole grain products
- Keep sugar concentrated desserts at a minimum

Cold Lunch

Children bringing cold lunch to school are encouraged to have one that consists of healthy and nutritious choices. Water, juice, and milk beverages are preferable. Milk is available at all schools for purchase with cold lunch.

Lunchroom Climate

Students will be provided with a relaxed and enjoyable climate for lunch. The lunchroom environment for students will have:

- Adequate space to eat and pleasant surroundings
- Adequate time for meals (20 minutes is minimum recommendation by American Food Service Association from time the child is seated)
- Convenient access to hand washing facilities before meals

Parents are always invited to join their child for hot or cold lunch. Parents who bring cold lunch/takeout food for their child are encouraged to follow the School Nutrition Guidelines and Healthy Choices List.

Snacks

Snacks brought by the students or served during the school day are encouraged to be healthy, nutritious food choices. This includes snacks provided during the after school program.

Outside Foods

Food brought by the students/parent for consumption during the school day are encouraged to be healthy, nutritious food choices. Sharing of outside food is not allowed, however, sharing of a reimbursable meal is allowable. No tamarindo, Lucas, chile or foods with chile will be permitted for consumption at school by students.

Classroom Parties/Celebrations

The classroom party is a great learning environment to promote healthy food and beverage choices.

- Food and drinks provided by staff for classroom parties must meet the School Nutrition Guidelines and Healthy Choices List.
- Students and parents are encouraged to provide food and beverages for classroom parties that meet the School Nutrition Guidelines and Healthy Choices List.

Classroom Rewards/Incentives

Consideration should be given to non-food items for rewards/incentives. Should teachers feel compelled to utilize food items as an incentive, they are encouraged to adhere to the School Nutrition Guidelines and Healthy Choices List. When curricular-based food experiences are planned, staff and students are encouraged to utilize items from School Nutrition Guidelines and Healthy Choices List.

Water Consumption

Staff members should encourage the consumption of water throughout the day, particularly during periods of hot weather. Water will be accessible for student consumption during breakfast and lunch. The use of water bottles in the classroom is recommended, but each teacher/grade level can establish their own policy. Water bottles should be taken home to be washed and/or sanitized regularly.

School Nutrition Guidelines

The Excellence in Leadership Academy strongly encourages the sale and distribution of nutrient dense foods for all school functions and activities. Nutrient dense foods are those foods that provide students with calories that are rich in nutrient content needed to be healthy. In an effort to support the consumption of nutrient dense foods in the school setting, the Excellence in Leadership Academy Board of Director has adopted the following Nutrition Guidelines governing the sale of food, beverage, and candy on school grounds.

Food

The consumption of nutrient dense foods such as whole grains, lean meats, seeds/nuts cheeses, fruits, and vegetables is encouraged (see Healthy Choices List). It is recognized that there may be rare special occasions when the Principal may allow a school group to deviate from these guidelines.

Beverages and Candy

- Vending and school store sales of soda and candy are not permitted to students between 7:30 am and 3:30 pm. Sales of beverages during the school day will include milk, 100% juice, and water/water products.
- Staff members are prohibited from providing soda and caffeinated beverages to students on school grounds.
- Coffee makers may be located in designated faculty areas, but staff members are prohibited from having coffee makers in student classrooms.
- It is highly encouraged that staff members use discretion when consuming soda and caffeine products such as coffee, espresso, latte, etc. in the presence of students.

Concessions

Evening and weekend concessions for extracurricular activities may include candy and soda sales. However, healthy food and beverage options should also be available.

Fundraising

It is important to promote fundraising activities that reinforce good food choices and lifestyle behaviors. New fundraising strategies which include the sale of healthy foods and non-food items, is a public demonstration of the school's commitment to promoting healthy behaviors among students, families, and the communities at large, while helping schools meet their financial needs.

Assurance

Guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than applicable federal regulations and guidance issued pursuant to the Child Nutrition Act and the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, as those regulations and guidance apply to schools.

Implementation and Evaluation of the Wellness Policy

To satisfy the requirements of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, the Excellence in Leadership Academy Wellness Committee shall monitor the Charter school's

implementation of the Wellness Policy and evaluate student health activities. Such monitoring will help gauge whether or not policies have in fact been implemented, whether or not they are effective, and their overall impact on student and staff health. The results may also highlight areas in need of further change and help shape future policy. The District's Wellness Committee will utilize the School Health Index as a tool to evaluate the effectiveness of this plan. In an effort to improve the health of the Excellence in Leadership Academy community, the Wellness Committee will report annually to the Principal and the Superintendent. The Board of Directors will receive any revisions to the Wellness Policy upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.

★ Nondiscrimination Statement – "In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability."

★ Complaint filing procedures – "To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 1 (866) 632-9992 (toll free), 1 (800) 877-8339 (Federal Relay Service) or 1 (800) 845-6136 (Spanish Speaking Assistance). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

Healthy Choices List (List is not all inclusive)

Proper portion size is important to healthy eating.

- Raw vegetable sticks/slices with low fat dressing or yogurt dip
- Fresh fruit and 100% fruit juices
- Frozen fruit juice pops
- Dried fruits (raisins, banana chips, etc.)
- Trail mix/Party mix (dried fruit, nuts, cereal, pretzels, etc.)
- Soy nuts, dry roasted peanuts, walnuts, almonds, pecans, and other tree Nuts (avoid coconut or palm nuts)
- Low-fat meats and cheese sandwiches
- Baked crackers (e.g. Goldfish crackers)
- Baked corn chips and fat-free potato chips with salsa and low-fat dips
- Low-fat muffins, low-fat cookies, and granola bars
- Angel food and sponge cakes
- Flavored yogurt and fruit parfaits
- Low-fat pudding cups
- Low-fat ice creams, frozen yogurt, sherbets
- Low-fat and skim milk products
- Unbuttered popcorn
- String cheese
- Single serve fruit cups in natural or light syrup
- Graham and flavored crackers
- Whole grain cereals and bagels
- Water and water products
- Sugar free gelatin