

# **VIBRANT MINDS CHARTER SCHOOL**

## **Wellness Policy**

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**VIBRANT MINDS**



**Presented to Vibrant Minds School Site Council Members via Email for  
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# Vibrant Minds Charter School’s Wellness Policy

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# Vibrant Minds Charter School's Wellness Policy

Vibrant Minds Charter School (VMCS) is an independent charter school, which results in it having a dual role of being both a school and a district. It is committed to the optimal development of every scholar. VMCS believes that for scholars to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success, we need to create strength-based, positive, and health-promoting learning environments at every level and in every setting throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components are strongly correlated with positive scholar outcomes -- good nutrition and physical activity before, during, and after the school day. For example, scholars' 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.<sup>1,2,3,4,5,6,7</sup> Conversely, inadequate consumption of specific foods (e.g., fruits, vegetables, and dairy products) is associated with lower grades among scholars.<sup>8,9, 10</sup> In addition, scholars who are physically active during recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education, and extracurricular activities do better academically.<sup>11,12,13,14</sup> Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.<sup>15,16,17</sup>

This policy outlines VMCS's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all scholars 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:

- Scholars at VMCS have access to healthy foods throughout the school day, both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus, in accordance with Federal and State nutrition standards;
- Scholars receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Scholars have opportunities to be physically active before, during, and after school;
- Scholars engage in the promotion of healthy nutrition, regular physical activity, and other healthy lifestyle choices that promote 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 VMCS in creating continuity between school and other settings for scholars and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits;
- VMCS establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives; and
- VMCS will coordinate the Wellness Policy with other aspects of school management, including the LCAP.

This policy applies to all scholars and staff at VMCS, which is an independent charter school. Specific, measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below. Also included are any relevant data or statistics from state or local sources supporting the need for establishing and achieving the goals in this policy.

## **School Wellness Committee**

### **Committee Role and Membership**

VMCS has created a Wellness Committee (hereto referred to as the VMWC) that meets at least three 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 Wellness Policy. The VMWC membership includes teacher representation from the primary grades (TK-2) and upper grades (3-6), as well as parents, meal clerk, community liaison, and executive director. There will be an effort to reflect the diversity of the community.

### **Leadership**

The Executive Director will convene the VMWC, facilitate development of and updates to the VMCS Wellness Policy, and ensure the school's compliance with the policy. The designated official for oversight is Debra J. Schroeder, Ed.D. She is the Founding/Executive Director of VMCS and can be reached at [dschroeder@vibrantminds.us](mailto:dschroeder@vibrantminds.us).

The names, titles, and contact information of all current individuals on the VMWC are:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title / Relationship to VMCS</b>	<b>E-mail Address</b>	<b>Role on Committee</b>
Debra J. Schroeder, Ed.D.	Founding/Executive Director	<a href="mailto:dschroeder@vibrantminds.us">dschroeder@vibrantminds.us</a>	Provides leadership for the VMWC and coordinates meetings
Chammarra Nguyen	Assistant Director	<a href="mailto:cnguyen@vibrantminds.us">cnguyen@vibrantminds.us</a>	Co-leads with the executive director, and coordinates the Special Education Program
Anaiss Servin	Community Liaison	<a href="mailto:aservin@vibrantminds.us">aservin@vibrantminds.us</a>	Coordinates the participation of parents and provides translation for Spanish-speaking members
Erica Piñon	Meal Clerk	<a href="mailto:epinon@vibrantminds.us">epinon@vibrantminds.us</a>	Provides feedback regarding the Free/Reduced Meal Program
Gloria Gallardo	Gr. 2 Teacher	<a href="mailto:ggallardo@vibrantminds.us">ggallardo@vibrantminds.us</a>	Shares strategies implemented in the classes to ensure the wellness of the scholars
Natalie Miranda	Gr. 5 Teacher	<a href="mailto:nmiranda@vibrantminds.us">nmiranda@vibrantminds.us</a>	Shares strategies implemented in the classes to ensure the wellness of the scholars
Yvette LaValle	F.A.S.T. and SSC Member	<a href="mailto:ylavalle@vibrantminds.us">ylavalle@vibrantminds.us</a>	Dual role as parent and staff members. Represents the parents, as well as provides support for wellness through volunteers

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

### **Implementation Plan**

VMCS has developed and will maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this Wellness Policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions, and timelines related to this Wellness Policy; and includes information about who will be responsible for which areas. There are specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education, and other school-based activities that promote scholar wellness. For the triennial evaluation at the end of the 2023-2024 school year, VMCS used the WellSAT 3.0 from the RUDD Center for Food Policy and Health to determine areas of strength and challenges for the refinement of the VMCS Wellness Policy. This assessment process supported the creation of an action plan that fosters implementation of the Wellness Policy and generates an annual progress report.

This Wellness Policy and the progress reports can be found at: <https://www.vibrantminds.us>.

### **Recordkeeping**

VMCS will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the Wellness Policy at the school, with an address of 1450 E. La Palma Ave., Anaheim, California 92805. Documentation maintained in this location will include, but will not be limited to:

- The written Wellness Policy;
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public;
- Documentation of efforts to review and update VMCS's Wellness Policy; including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods VMCS uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the VMWC;
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements;
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the local school Wellness Policy;
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the VMCS Wellness Policy has been made available to the public.

### **Annual Notification of Policy**

VMCS 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. VMCS will make this information available via the school's website and/or school-wide communications. VMCS will provide as much information as possible about the school nutrition environment. This will include a summary of the school's events or activities related to Wellness Policy implementation. Annually, the school will also publicize the name and contact information of VMCS official leading and coordinating the committee, as well as information on how the public can get involved with the school's VMWC.

### **Triennial Progress Assessments**

At least once every three years, VMCS will evaluate compliance with the Wellness Policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include. The latest triennial assessment occurred at the end of the 2023-2024 school year. The assessment conducted through the WellSAT 3.0 included:

- The extent to which VMCS is in compliance with the Wellness Policy.
- The extent to which VMCS's Wellness Policy compares to a model wellness policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of VMCS's Wellness Policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is Debra J. Schroeder, Ed.D., Founding/Executive Director of VMCS, at [dschroeder@vibrantminds.us](mailto:dschroeder@vibrantminds.us) or 714-563-2390.

The VMWC will monitor the school's compliance with this Wellness Policy.

VMCS will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

### **Revisions and Updating the Policy**

The VMWC will update or modify the Wellness Policy based on the results of the annual School Health Index and triennial assessments and/or as VMCS'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**

VMCS is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the Wellness Policy. VMCS will actively communicate ways in which representatives of the VMWC and others can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the Wellness Policy through a variety of means appropriate for VMCS. VMCS 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. VMCS will use electronic mechanisms, such as e-mail 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 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. VMCS will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that VMCS is communicating important school information with parents.

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

## **Nutrition**

### **School Meals**

VMCS is committed to serving healthy meals to our scholars with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams *trans*-fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and that meet the nutrition needs of our scholars within their calorie requirements. The school meal program aims to improve the diet and health of our scholars, 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.

VMCS participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), as well as the State Nutrition Program. VMCS also provides an after-school snack to all scholars remaining past 3:00 p.m. for the Little Labs, Big Labs, and ASES Programs. VMCS is committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal and State child nutrition programs. While some of the recommendations below are difficult to implement in our current location, they will be incorporated into our meal program and Picnic Plaza at our new site beginning in 2025-2026. School meals will be provided that:

- Are accessible to all scholars;
- Are appealing and attractive to scholars;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;

- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by Local, State, and Federal statutes and regulations. (VMCS offers reimbursable school meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](#).)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using at least ten of the following [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#):
  - Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chaffing dishes or hotel pans).
  - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily.
  - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of scholars.
  - All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names.
  - Daily vegetable options are bundled into all grab-and-go meals available to scholars.
  - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt scholars to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
  - White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers.
  - Alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas.
  - A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to scholars (e.g., salad bars, snack rooms, etc.).
  - Scholar surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space décor, and promotional ideas.
  - Scholar artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas.
  - Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options.

The following practices will also be implemented:

- Menus will be posted on the VMCS website and will include nutrient content and ingredients.
- Menus will be created/reviewed by a Registered Dietitian or other certified nutrition professional.
- School meals are administered by a team of child nutrition professionals.
- VMCS's nutrition program will accommodate scholars with special dietary needs.
- Scholars will be allowed at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal and are seated. This meets the Healthy Schools Program Gold- level criteria.
- Scholars are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
- Participation in Federal child nutrition programs will be promoted among scholars and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their children's school.
- VMCS will implement at least four of the following Farm to School activities which meets the Healthy Schools Program Gold-level criteria:
  - Local and/or regional products are incorporated into the school meal program;
  - Messages about agriculture and nutrition are reinforced throughout the learning environment;
  - School hosts a school garden;
  - School hosts field trips to local farms; and
  - School utilizes promotions or special events, such as tastings, that highlight the local/ regional products.

### **Staff Qualifications and Professional Development**

VMCS will be supported by the Anaheim Union High School District as its School Food Authority (SFA) and vendor. This entity will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the [USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals](#). The school nutrition personnel will refer to [USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website](#) to search for training that meet their learning needs.

Additionally, staff members at VMCS will undergo professional development and be certified in safe food

handling.

## **Water**

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all scholars throughout the school day. VMCS will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.

- Water is available in the two meal areas for the Grade TK scholars and the Grade K-6 scholars. Drinking fountains and refill stations are also located throughout our temporary campus.
- All water sources and containers will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene and health safety standards. Such sources and containers may include drinking fountains, water jugs, hydration stations, water jets, and other methods for delivering drinking water.
- Scholars will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water throughout the day.

## **Competitive Foods and Beverages**

VMCS is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to scholars 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 scholar 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, as well as a Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools are available at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/guide-smart-snacks-school>. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available at <https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take-action/schools/wellness-topics/smart-snacks>.

To support healthy food choices and improve scholar health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to scholars on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the State and USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, à la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, and snack or food carts. At this time, VMCS does not sell any food and beverages outside of the reimbursable school meal programs.

## **Celebrations and Rewards**

All foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the State and USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, including:

- Celebrations and parties -- VMCS will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas. Healthy party ideas are available from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation at <https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take-action/schools/wellness-topics/smart-snacks/celebrations>.
- Classroom snacks brought by parents – Parents are instructed to not bring food in celebration of their scholars’ birthdays. Instead, they are encouraged to donate a book or an item for the classroom. For the three classroom celebrations (i.e., Thanksgiving, Valentine’s Day, and End-of-Year), the School will provide to the parents a list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards while avoiding any allergen of scholars in the class. This can also be found at: <https://foodandhealth.com/usda-school-snack-guide/>
- Rewards and incentives -- The School will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a list of alternative ways to reward children. Foods and beverages will seldom be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation shares alternatives to rewarding children at: Alliance for a Healthier Generation <https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take-action/schools/wellness-topics/nutrition-services/non-food-rewards>.

## 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. VMCS will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas. The two main fundraisers are Cow Chip Bingo and the Color Run, which do not involve the sale of food items. Here are some examples of healthy fundraising ideas:

<https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take-action/schools/wellness-topics/smart-snacks/fundraising> and <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/best-practices-healthy-school-fundraisers> .

## 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.

Scholars and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout the school's classrooms and Picnic Plaza. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to scholars and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff, teachers, parents, scholars, and the community.

VMCS will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all scholars throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur, at minimum, through:

- Implementing at least ten or more evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal program using [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#); and
- Ensuring 100% of foods and beverages promoted to scholars meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Additional promotion techniques that VMCS may use are available <https://www.healthiergeneration.org/our-work/business-sector-engagement/improving-access-to-address-health-equity/smart-food-planner>.

## Nutrition Education

VMCS will teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by all scholars. VMCS will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide scholars 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.
- 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.
- 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 (meets Healthy Schools Program Silver/Gold-level criteria);

- All classroom teachers will provide opportunities for scholars to practice or rehearse the skills taught through the health education curricula (meets Healthy Schools Program Silver/Gold- level criteria).

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

VMCS will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 of the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- Relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Food guidance from [MyPlate](#)
- Reading and using FDA's nutrition fact labels
- 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
- Risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- Accepting body size differences
- Food safety
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Making healthy choices when eating at restaurants
- Eating disorders
- [The Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#)
- Reducing sodium intake
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers, and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to nutrition and dietary behavior
- How to develop a plan and track progress toward achieving a personal goal to eat healthfully
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior
- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior

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

VMCS is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all scholars to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day, while minimizing commercial distractions. VMCS strives to teach scholars how to make informed choices about nutrition, health, and physical

activity. These efforts will be weakened if scholars are subjected to advertising on school property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information VMCS is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of VMCS to protect and promote scholar'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 VMCS's Wellness Policy.

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to scholars on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the State and USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Food and beverage marketing are defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage marketing often includes 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.<sup>15</sup> 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 is not required; however, districts will replace or update scoreboards or other durable equipment when existing contracts are up for renewal or to the extent that is in financially possible over time so that items are in 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 VMCS.
- 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.

As VMCS reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment, and product purchasing (and replacement), decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by VMCS's Wellness Policy. At this time, VMCS has not permitted any marketing of food and/or beverages on our campus.

## **Physical Activity**

Children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of scholars' physical activity can be provided through a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP). A CSPAP reflects strong coordination and synergy across all of the components: quality physical education as the foundation; physical activity before, during, and after school; and staff involvement and family and community engagement. VMCS is committed to providing these opportunities. VMCS will ensure that these varied physical activity opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education (addressed in "Physical Education" subsection). VMCS classrooms will be encouraged to participate in Active Schools <https://www.activeschoolsus.org/> to successfully address all CSPAP areas.

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks, or physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason, unless a scholar is involved in an in-school or home suspension or an expulsion. VMCS will provide teachers and other school staff with a list of ideas for alternative ways to discipline scholars.

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

Additionally:

- Through a formal joint- or shared-use agreement, indoor and outdoor physical activity facilities and spaces will be open to scholars, their families, and the community outside of school hours (meets Healthy Schools Program Gold-level criteria). [Change Lab Solutions](#) provides guidance regarding joint- or shared-use agreements.
- VMCS will ensure that inventories of physical activity supplies and equipment are known and, when necessary, will work with community partners to ensure sufficient quantities of equipment are available to encourage physical activity for as many scholars as possible.

## **Physical Education**

VMCS will provide scholars 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). The curriculum will support the essential components of physical education.

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

All scholars in each grade will receive physical education for at least 100 minutes per week throughout the school year (meets Healthy Schools Program Silver-level criteria).

VMCS’s physical education program will promote scholar’s physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments (via the [Presidential Youth Fitness Program](#) or other appropriate assessment tool) and will use criterion-based reporting for each scholar.

- Scholars will be moderately to vigorously active for at least 50% of class time during most or all physical education class sessions (meets Healthy Schools Program Silver-level criteria).
- Waivers, exemptions, or substitutions for physical education classes are not granted, unless a scholar has temporary restrictions documented in writing by a medical professional.

## **Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education**

Health education will be required in all grades (elementary). VMCS will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 the following essential topics on physical activity:

- The physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- 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 or video game playing
- 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
- Developing an individualized physical activity and fitness plan
- Monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan
- Dangers of using performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids
- 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**

All elementary schools will offer at least 20 minutes of outdoor recess on all days during the school year, with the exception of days when there is inclement weather. VMCS offers at least 35 minutes. Inclement weather is defined as days when it is raining, above 90 degrees, or at the discretion of the Executive Director or his/her designee based on his/her best judgment of safety conditions.

In the event that the school or district must conduct indoor recess, teachers and staff will follow indoor recess guidelines (in development) that promote physical activity for scholars, to the extent practicable.

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage scholars to be active, and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the scholars whenever feasible.

### **Classroom Physical Activity Breaks**

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

VMCS will provide resources and links to resources, tools, and technology with ideas for classroom physical activity breaks. Resources and ideas are available through [Action For Healthy Kids](#), and the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#).

### **Active Academics**

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, mathematics, English-language arts, social studies, and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

VMCS 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 scholars whenever feasible.

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

VMCS offers opportunities for scholars to participate in physical activity either before and/or after the school day (or both) through a variety of methods. VMCS will encourage scholars to be physically active before and after school by providing activities such as:

- Cheerleading
- Dance
- Running Club
- Sports
- Walk and Talk before school
- Yoga

## **Active Transport**

VMCS will support active transport to and from school, such as walking or biking, whenever it is feasible. Because VMCS is a school of choice and our families come from a variety of areas, active transport (walking or biking to and from school) must be a family's choice depending upon the location of their homes.

## **Other Activities that Promote Scholar Wellness**

VMCS will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues, and physical activity facilities. VMCS 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 toward the same set of goals and objectives promoting scholar well-being, optimal development, and strong educational outcomes.

VMCS teachers are encouraged to coordinate content across curricular areas that promote scholar health, such as teaching nutrition concepts in mathematics, discussing health concepts during the study of science, and exploring life expectancies throughout history and around the world.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state, or association recognition or grants/funding for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of the Wellness Policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the VMWC.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the Wellness Policy guidelines. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

## **Community Partnerships**

VMCS will enhance relationships with community partners (e.g., Anaheim Union High School District, hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, SNAP-Ed providers and coordinators, etc.) in support of this Wellness Policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the Wellness Policy and its goals.

## **Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement**

VMCS will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. 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, VMCS will use electronic mechanisms (e.g., e-mail or displaying notices on the school's website), as well as non-electronic mechanisms, (e.g., newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents), to ensure that 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 VMWC will have a staff wellness subcommittee that focuses on staff wellness issues, identifies and disseminates wellness resources, and performs other functions that support staff wellness in coordination with the director. The names of the leaders of the subcommittee are Gloria Gallardo, Natalie Miranda, and Yvette LaValle.

VMCS will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. Examples of possible strategies include participation in Morning Gathering exercises, activity breaks during Teacher Think Tank Meetings, walking/running cohorts during lunch and after school, etc. VMCS promotes staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management through partnership with local entities.

## **Professional Learning**

When feasible, VMCS 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 VMCS staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing school reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

## **Glossary**

**Extended School Day** – The time during, before, and after school that includes activities such as clubs, intramural sports, band and choir practice, drama rehearsals, and more.

**School Campus** - areas that are owned or leased by the school and used at any time for school-related activities, 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** – The time between midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

**Triennial** – Recurring every three years.


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2. Fax:  
202-690-7442; or
3. Email:  
[Program.Intake@usda.gov](mailto:Program.Intake@usda.gov).

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