

Seneca Local School Wellness Policy

Seneca Family of Agencies recognizes the link between student health and learning and desires to provide a program promoting healthy eating and physical activity in children. In doing so, Seneca Family of Agencies' non-public schools remain committed to providing individually tailored education programs that meet students' greatest needs and help them find success at school, at home, and beyond.

Section 1: Nutrition Education

- a) Nutrition education must be emphasized for children to be capable of making wise lifelong food choices. To that end, Seneca non-public schools will focus on the four following goals:
 - I. *Nutrition Promotion*
Seneca non-public schools will increase student awareness of the availability of balanced meals and snacks at school and in their communities by soliciting feedback from students regarding the nutrition program, offering taste tests, and connecting students and their families to local food resources.
 - II. *Nutrition Education*
At least once per month, Seneca non-public schools will provide students with supplemental health and nutrition education by bringing school nurses, PE teachers, and other health professionals into classrooms.
 - III. *Physical Activity*
Seneca non-public schools will increase the intentionality and breadth of physical education classes by incorporating regular sets of various physical activities that target strength-building, endurance, and flexibility.
 - IV. *Other Wellness Activities*
Seneca non-public schools will increase family engagement and streamline communication with families by creating and maintaining program-specific web sites (at least one update per month) and providing families with both hard copy and electronic submission options for appropriate school documents.
- b) Students at Seneca non-public schools (K-12) will receive a sequential and comprehensive nutrition education based on state standards¹.

- c) The nutrition education program will teach practical skills such as media awareness, reading nutrition labels, appropriate portion sizes, etc. and will be integrated into other academic courses.
- d) Nutrition education will be linked with the school food environment through school gardens and/or gardening clubs at participating sites.

Section 2: Standards for School Meals

- a) All reimbursable school meals will meet or exceed current nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*² and the school meal nutrition standards specified by the Department of Agriculture and the California Department of Education^{3,4}.
- b) Seneca non-public schools will communicate the importance of a healthy breakfast to families and will notify them of the availability of the School Breakfast Program at participating school sites during intake and at school events such as Back-to-School Night.
- c) All students at Seneca non-public schools will receive school meals at no cost. Caregivers will be notified of the availability of breakfast and lunch at intake and will be encouraged to determine eligibility for free or reduced-price meals at that time. In these ways, Seneca non-public schools will:
 - i. Protect the privacy of students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals
 - ii. Prevent social stigma attached to unpaid meal balances
 - iii. Encourage participation in the school meal program
- d) Applications for free or reduced-price meals are distributed to all families at the beginning of the school year and shall be offered a \$10 Target gift card as an incentive for returning a complete application.
- e) Seneca non-public schools will provide students with at least 20 minutes to eat lunch and at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast.
- f) Seneca non-public schools will provide students with access to free, potable water throughout the school day. Staff will be encouraged to model drinking water and will encourage students to use water to help them regulate and stay healthy.

- g) Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs, and continuing professional development for all school nutrition professionals will be provided in accordance with the USDA Professional Standards for State and Local Nutrition Programs⁵.

Section 3: Nutrition Standards for Competitive and Other Foods and Beverages

- a) Seneca non-public schools do not provide competitive foods or beverages.
- b) Food plays a role in how we celebrate students and special events. Food is provided at celebrations (e.g. birthdays, transition parties, and behavioral contracts) as a tool to build community. Food will only be used to complement relationship-building and celebration rather than as a reinforcement for behavior.
 - i. The use of food (or the action of withholding food) as a punishment is strictly prohibited.
 - ii. Non-food and healthy food celebrations will be promoted and regularly reinforced to all staff members and families.
 - iii. When serving or distributing foods and/or beverages to students before, during, or after the school day outside the school meal program, staff shall encourage students to select items that meet or exceed local, state, and federal nutrition standards, such as the California Smart Snack in Schools nutrition standards⁶.
 - iv. Foods and/or beverages served or distributed to students before, during, or after the school day outside the school meal program that are high in sugar, sodium, and/or saturated and trans fats shall be limited to one serving.
 - v. Caffeinated foods and beverages are not permitted to be served or distributed to students at any time.

Section 4: Physical Education and Physical Activity

- a) Seneca non-public schools will provide students (K-12) with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with the expectations established in the state's curriculum framework⁷ and content standards⁸.
- b) 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.

- c) Elementary students in each grade at Seneca non-public schools will receive physical education for at least 100 minutes weekly throughout the school year. Secondary students will receive at least 200 minutes of physical education weekly throughout the school year.
- d) Seneca non-public schools will support all physical education teachers in receiving annual professional development opportunities that are focused on physical education/physical activity topics and competencies specifically for physical education teachers.
- e) Temporary exemptions from physical education are limited to student medical conditions and/or injuries. Seneca non-public schools will not allow physical education waivers or substitutions unless required to do so by a district partner.
- f) Seneca non-public schools will promote physical activity outside of physical education class in the following ways:
 - i. By incorporating at least one physical activity that can include families during school events (such as Back-to-School Night)
 - ii. By providing students with movement breaks throughout the school day
 - iii. By connecting students to physical activities in their communities and, as needed, using dedicated funds to remove financial barriers from student participation in community sports, etc.
 - iv. By providing students 12 and up with the option to participate in the non-public school sports league
 - v. By providing at least two recesses per day for all elementary-aged students. During recess, staff members will serve as role models by being physically active alongside students whenever feasible.

Section 5: Wellness Promotion and Marketing

- a) Seneca staff are strongly encouraged to model healthy nutrition throughout the school day and while on the school site.
- b) Seneca staff will also assist in modeling physical activity by participating alongside students in physical activity breaks and incorporating physical activity into lesson plans.
- c) Seneca non-public schools will encourage staff to provide students with additional opportunities for physical activity as a reward. Furthermore, physical activity (including but not limited to recess, physical activity breaks, or physical education) will not be withheld as punishment, and the assignment of other physical tasks, such as push-ups or

the running of laps, will not be used as a punishment.

- d) Seneca non-public schools will promote healthy food and beverage choices throughout the school environment. These food and beverage options must comply with Smart Snack in Schools⁶ standards.
- e) Seneca non-public schools prohibit the marketing and advertising of non-nutritious foods and beverages through signage, vending machine fronts, logos, scoreboards/signboards, school supplies, advertisements in school publications, coupon or incentive programs, or other means.
- f) Seneca non-public schools are committed to supporting staff wellness by providing:
 - a. Self-care strategies in weekly supervisions and regular staff meetings
 - b. Access to an employee assistance program (EAP)
 - c. Opportunities for staff to eat school meals and/or participate with students in physical education classes and other physical activities

Section 6: Implementation, Evaluation, and Communication

- a) Seneca non-public schools will convene a Seneca NPS Wellness Committee (SNWC) that meets at least two times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and nutrition policies and programs, including the development, implementation, communication, and periodic review and update of this wellness policy.
 - i. SNWC membership will include to the extent possible: parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program; physical education teachers; school health professionals; mental health professionals; school administrators; and the general public.
 - ii. Members will be recruited by sending out an email to the school community, promoting the committee in school newsletters, and posting information about the committee on each school's web site⁹.
- b) Seneca's Education Quality Manager will be responsible for the implementation and compliance of this wellness policy.
- c) Unless otherwise specified, the Program Director and/or Nutrition Coordinator of each Seneca non-public school will be accountable for ensuring his/her/their school's compliance with this wellness policy and will establish a School Wellness Committee (SWC) to develop and implement action plans relative to their school health and

wellness needs.

- d) This wellness policy will be made available to the public on each school's web site⁹.
- e) At least once every three years, the SNWC will assess the implementation, development, and communication of this wellness policy. The results of this assessment will be made available to the public and will include:
 - i. The extent to which each school is in compliance with this wellness policy
 - ii. The extent to which this wellness policy compares to a model wellness policy
 - iii. A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of this wellness policy.
- f) The SNWC will update or modify this wellness policy based on the results of the triennial assessment report and/or as the priorities of Seneca's non-public schools change, community needs change, wellness goals are met, new health science, information, and technology emerges, and/or new federal or state guidance or standards are issued.
- g) At least annually, Seneca non-public schools will use electronic mechanisms, such as displaying notices each school's web site, as well as non-electronic mechanisms 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. At least annually, the SNWC will create a wellness policy summary, fact sheet, or brochure to be translated into languages spoken by students' families to ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate.

References

1. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/healthstandmar08.pdf>
2. https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2019-05/2015-2020_Dietary_Guidelines.pdf
3. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/nfbmpbreakfast.asp>
4. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/newfbmplunch.asp>
5. https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/profstandards_flyer.pdf
6. https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/USDA_SmartSnacks_508_62019.pdf
7. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/pe/cf/documents/peframework2009.pdf>
8. <https://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/pestandards.pdf>
9. <https://www.senecafoa.org/buildingblocks>
<https://www.senecafoa.org/catalyst>
<https://senecafoa.org/jba>
<https://www.senecafoa.org/pathfinder>

NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT: In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Ave SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) E-mail: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.