



## THE LABORATORY CHARTER SCHOOL

### **School Wellness Policy on Physical Activity and Nutrition**

Laboratory Charter School believes that student wellness is essential to learning. Proper nutrition, regular physical activity, and a healthy school environment help students grow, develop, and achieve academically. The goal of this policy is to ensure that every student has daily opportunities to learn about healthy choices and to practice healthy habits at school. The policy explains how wellness is promoted across programs and outlines the shared responsibilities of staff, families, students, and community partners in supporting a healthy, safe, and inclusive learning environment.

This policy is adopted in accordance with federal and state laws, including 42 U.S.C. § 1758b (Local School Wellness Policy Requirements), 7 CFR § 210.31 (National School Lunch Program wellness requirements), and 24 P.S. § 1422.1 of the Pennsylvania School Code. These laws require schools to set wellness goals, establish nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available at school, engage families and community partners, and report on progress. The Board of Trustees adopts this policy as a formal commitment to meet and exceed those standards for the benefit of all students.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for implementing this policy and ensuring that all programs comply with its provisions. Building principals or their designees provide annual updates to the CEO regarding wellness initiatives and outcomes at their respective campuses. The CEO designates a Wellness Coordinator to organize this work, lead the School Wellness Council, coordinate communications, collect data, and prepare reports. Laboratory Charter School uses a continuous-improvement model that includes setting measurable goals, implementing action plans, gathering feedback, and making necessary adjustments to strengthen school wellness over time. Questions regarding policy implementation should be directed to Dr. Andrea Coleman-Hill, Chief Executive Officer and Wellness Policy Coordinator, at [CEO@labcharter.com](mailto:CEO@labcharter.com) or (267) 817-4720.

Each year, Laboratory Charter School publicly shares its wellness policy, any updates, and the most recent assessment results through the school website, newsletters, and ClassDojo. The annual notice also provides opportunities for families and community members to participate in wellness events or share feedback, ensuring transparency and community engagement. Stakeholders may sign up to participate in the Wellness Council during the annual August Professional Development program.

The School Wellness Council includes students, parents and guardians, teachers, school leaders, a member of the Board of Trustees, food-service professionals, and community representatives. The Council advises on student-health priorities, reviews menus and nutrition-education activities, and recommends strategies for making physical activity a regular part of the school day. The Council meets regularly and documents its recommendations, evaluates implementation at least biennially, and participates in a USDA-aligned triennial assessment. The Food Service Management Company (FSMC) collaborates with the Council to engage students and parents in menu planning for breakfast and lunch programs and to make nutrient-content information available for all menu items. To further promote health education, a cafeteria-adjacent bulletin board displays a monthly nutrition and wellness theme.

Nutrition education is integrated throughout the curriculum in developmentally appropriate ways and aligned with Pennsylvania academic standards. Teachers incorporate nutrition concepts into science, mathematics, language arts, social studies, and health lessons that emphasize practical skills such as reading nutrition labels, planning balanced meals, and understanding the connection between food, energy, and learning. Staff members receive professional development to ensure instruction reflects current nutrition science and engages students meaningfully. Nutrition-education materials will be reviewed by a qualified professional—such as a School Food Nutrition Specialist, Registered Dietitian, or Registered Nurse—to ensure scientific accuracy. Families receive wellness resources through newsletters, ClassDojo, and the school website so that healthy habits continue at home. The school promotes non-food celebrations or nutritious alternatives, discourages the use of food as a reward, and maintains proper facilities for handwashing and oral hygiene before meals and snacks.

Laboratory Charter School recognizes that physical activity supports learning, health, and social-emotional well-being. Students have opportunities to accumulate 20 to 30 minutes of age-appropriate physical activity on most days through recess, movement breaks, and physical-education classes. Physical education is taught by certified instructors and aligns with 22 Pa. Code § 4.27 (Health, Safety, and Physical Education). Activities are developmentally appropriate and inclusive of students with medical needs or disabilities. Teachers incorporate short movement breaks during long instructional periods and limit sedentary time to less than two consecutive hours. Physical activity will not be used or withheld as a form of punishment. When possible, school facilities are made available to the community to promote active living beyond the school day. The Wellness Council will develop and disseminate resources to faculty and staff for integrating physical activity across curricula, and students will be encouraged to participate in physical activity outside of school in both competitive and non-competitive environments.

All meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs meet or exceed USDA nutrition standards. Students have free access to drinking water and at least twenty minutes of seated time to eat lunch. Laboratory Charter School will make every effort to eliminate stigma and prevent the identification of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Vending machines do not provide access to soda or beverages with minimal nutritional value and comply with Smart Snacks in School standards. Foods and beverages sold on campus, including à la carte items, vending machines, fundraisers, and school stores, meet federal and state requirements. Meetings or tutoring sessions during meal times are scheduled so that students may eat without disruption, and students are discouraged from sharing food due to allergy and safety concerns. Foods of minimal nutritional value will not be offered to students, faculty, or staff during school hours or at school-sponsored events. The FSMC encourages feedback from families and integrates student preferences into menu cycles.

Non-sold food and beverage items, such as classroom snacks, rewards, and celebrations, also influence student health. Whenever possible, these items meet Smart Snacks standards. Classrooms are encouraged to plan non-food celebrations or include nutritious options like fruits, vegetables, and water. The school provides families with resources and ideas for healthy celebrations and non-food rewards.

Food and beverage marketing on campus must be consistent with Smart Snacks standards. This requirement applies to posters, scoreboards, vending fronts, coupons, promotions, and any sponsored materials displayed or distributed during the school day. All contracts, sponsorships, and marketing materials are reviewed annually for compliance.

A healthy school environment extends beyond meals and physical education. The school maintains clean, safe, and inviting dining areas with accessible handwashing or sanitizing stations. Wellness initiatives include schoolwide events such as Health Fairs, Walk-a-Thons, and Jump-for-Heart programs, which may also serve as fund-raisers to support future wellness efforts. Partnerships with organizations like the YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs, and community health agencies expand wellness opportunities for students and families. Staff members are expected to model healthy behaviors, reinforcing a culture of lifelong wellness throughout the school community.

The School Wellness Council establishes annual SMART goals, specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound, to monitor progress in nutrition, physical activity, and overall wellness. Legacy and current goals include maintaining at least two wellness events per year, reducing food-based fundraisers and sweets-heavy celebrations, offering targeted supports for families of overweight or obese kindergarten and first-grade students, increasing National School Lunch Program participation by five percent annually, implementing at least two daily classroom movement breaks by 2026, hosting three or

more wellness events each year, and increasing fruit and vegetable selection in school meals by ten percent by 2027. Progress toward these goals is reviewed annually and reported publicly through the school's website and newsletters.

Laboratory Charter School maintains all records demonstrating implementation of this policy, including current policy documents, public notifications, Wellness Council minutes, biennial reviews, triennial assessments, and measurable progress reports. These materials are available to the public for review to promote transparency and accountability.

The wellness policy and all related documents are provided in accessible formats and translated as needed for families with limited English proficiency or disabilities. The school strives to make wellness activities inclusive and representative of the diversity of the Laboratory Charter School community.

At least once every three years, the school conducts a comprehensive assessment of this policy and its implementation. The assessment compares Laboratory Charter School's practices to model policies and current USDA and PDE expectations, identifies strengths and areas for improvement, and informs future revisions. Results are shared publicly and guide the school's continuous-improvement cycle.

If any portion of this policy conflicts with state or federal law, the law shall prevail. Relevant authorities include 24 P.S. §§ 504.1, 701, 742, 1422, 1512.1, and 1513; 42 U.S.C. §§ 1751 et seq. and 1773; and 7 CFR Parts 210 and 220. Related Laboratory Charter School Board Policies include 102, 103, 103.1, 105, 209.1, 229, and 808.

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Adopted: November 2021      Revised: August 2025