



Muskegon Catholic Central (MCC)

Wellness Policy on Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Mental Health & Healing

Effective date: September 2025

Supersedes: prior versions of MCC's Wellness Policy

Muskegon Catholic Central

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Adopted by:

Adoption Date: _____

Review Date: _____

Preamble

Children need access to nourishing foods, regular physical activity, and supportive mental health environments to grow, learn, and thrive. Good health supports attendance, behavior, and academic achievement. MCC is committed to a whole-child approach that integrates nutrition, movement, and mental wellbeing across the school day and in partnership with families.

Purpose & Scope

This written local school wellness policy guides MCC in establishing and maintaining a school-wide environment that promotes student health, wellbeing, and learning. It applies to all grade levels (PK–12), all campuses, and all school-sponsored activities on and off campus during the school day. The policy aligns with current federal and state requirements, including **7 CFR 210.31** (Local School Wellness Policy) and the **USDA 2024 Final Rule** updating school meal patterns and Smart Snacks.

Wellness Committee & Leadership

Committee Role & Membership

MCC will convene a representative **Wellness Committee** to establish goals and oversee development, implementation, and periodic review of this policy. Membership will include, to the extent practicable: parents/caregivers, students, school nutrition program representatives, PE and health education teachers, school health professionals, mental health/social services staff, administrators, school board members, and community members. The committee will include representation across elementary and secondary levels and reflect the diversity of our community.

Policy Leadership

Designated leaders have authority and responsibility to ensure compliance and implementation:

- Head of School
- Principal(s)
- Assistant Principal(s)
- Food Service Director

Leaders may designate building-level coordinators to support monitoring, communications, and reporting.

Nutrition

Nutrition Education

All students PK–12 receive nutrition education that builds knowledge, skills, and values for healthy eating. Instruction is developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, and participatory; it is integrated across curriculum where feasible and reinforced in cafeterias and common spaces. Staff who deliver nutrition education receive appropriate training and resources.

Nutrition Promotion

MCC uses evidence-based approaches and positive messaging to encourage healthy choices and participation in school meals. Nutrition information, menus, and tips are shared via the website and school communications. Families are encouraged to send snacks and lunches that support the policy's standards.

School Meals (NSLP/SBP)

Meals meet or exceed all applicable federal and state requirements, including implementation timelines in the **USDA 2024 Final Rule**. Specifically:

- **Milk:** Unflavored and flavored fat-free or low-fat milk may be offered at all grades; **unflavored milk is available daily**. Flavored milk complies with USDA **added-sugars** limits and portion sizes.
- **Whole Grains:** **80%** of grains offered weekly are **whole grain-rich**; any remaining grains are enriched.
- **Sodium:** MCC will implement the USDA sodium reduction effective **July 1, 2027** (-15% lunch; -10% breakfast).
- **Added Sugars:** Beginning **SY 2025–26**, product-based limits apply to **flavored milk, yogurt, and breakfast cereals**; beginning **SY 2027–28**, average weekly added sugars in NSLP/SBP are **<10% of calories**.
- **Breakfast Flexibility:** Breakfast requirements may be met with grains and/or meat/meat alternates per USDA allowances.
- **Fruits & Vegetables:** A variety of fresh, frozen, and canned (in juice/light syrup or water) fruits and vegetables are regularly offered; 100% juice is limited consistent with meal pattern guidance.
- **Meal Service Environment:** Meals are served in clean, pleasant settings; students are provided **at least 20 minutes of seated time** to eat lunch.

MCC will engage students and families (e.g., **taste-tests**, surveys) in selecting appealing, culturally inclusive menu items.

Meal Modifications & Accommodations

MCC provides reasonable modifications to meals for students with disabilities or medical needs as supported by a **medical statement** from a state-licensed healthcare professional (and, beginning **July 1, 2025**, registered dietitians, per USDA). Non-disability requests (e.g., religious needs) are considered consistent with USDA guidance and operational feasibility. Fluid milk substitutes meet current USDA nutrient specifications.

Scheduling, Access, and Dignity

- Lunch is scheduled between approximately **11:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.** where feasible.
- Non-instructional activities should **not** displace students' meal time; students may eat during permitted activities when conflicts are unavoidable.
- Handwashing or sanitizing opportunities are provided before meals.
- Systems and practices minimize overt identification of students receiving free or reduced-price meals.

Competitive Foods (Smart Snacks) & Fundraisers

All foods and beverages **sold to students during the school day** (midnight before until **30 minutes after** the instructional day) meet **USDA Smart Snacks** standards. Clarifiers:

- **High schools** may sell additional **no-/low-calorie beverages** within Smart Snacks limits; younger grades follow elementary/middle beverage lists.
- **Bean dips (including hummus)** are **exempt from the Total Fat** standard under Smart Snacks; they must still meet all other standards (e.g., saturated fat, sodium).
- **Michigan fundraiser exemptions:** MCC may allow up to **two** non-compliant food/beverage fundraisers **per week per building**, each lasting **one day**, tracked at the building level. Exempt items are **not** sold in food service areas during mealtimes. Schools are encouraged to choose compliant or non-food fundraisers whenever possible.

Classroom Snacks, Celebrations, & Rewards

- Snacks served during the school day and in afterschool programming should emphasize fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and water.
- Classroom celebrations follow Smart Snacks during the school day; teachers are encouraged to provide **non-food rewards** (e.g., extra recess, privileges, recognition).

- Food sharing is discouraged due to allergy and dietary concerns.

Procurement & Buy American

MCC follows applicable procurement rules and is committed to **Buy American** provisions, procuring domestic agricultural commodities and products to the maximum extent practicable, with limited documented exceptions as allowed by USDA.

Physical Activity & Physical Education

MCC supports the national recommendation that children engage in **60 minutes** of physical activity daily.

Physical Education (PE)

- All students receive PE aligned to state standards and taught by certified/endorsed PE teachers.
- In grades **Young 5-6**, students receive PE weekly totaling **50 minutes** per grade level.
- In grades **7-12**, PE is scheduled by term; students complete **two terms (18 weeks)** of PE to satisfy graduation requirements.
- Students are active for **50%** of PE class time in **moderate-to-vigorous** activity.
- Adapted PE and inclusive opportunities are provided as needed.

Activity During the Day

- Elementary students receive **20 minutes of daily recess**, preferably outdoors, with access to space and equipment. MCC aims for **recess before lunch** where operationally feasible.

- Teachers may incorporate short **movement breaks** and integrate activity into lessons.
- MCC discourages extended sedentary periods (2 hours); testing schedules include periodic stretch/movement breaks when possible.

Before/After School & Community Use

- MCC offers extracurricular and interscholastic physical activity opportunities inclusive of students of all abilities.
- To promote safe, active transport, MCC collaborates on **Safe Routes to School** planning as feasible.
- School facilities may be available for community physical activity and nutrition programs pursuant to facility-use and safety policies.

Mental Health & Healing

MCC recognizes the importance of mental and emotional wellbeing. Following any traumatic event that impacts the school community, and after immediate safety needs are addressed, MCC will support **healing and recovery** by:

- Providing access to school counselors, social workers, and school-based mental health professionals.
- Referring to community mental health partners and licensed clinicians when needs exceed school capacity.
- Implementing trauma-informed, culturally responsive practices and communicating available supports to students, staff, and families.

- Offering staff training on recognizing distress and responding appropriately.
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Staff Wellness

MCC values staff health and will plan and implement activities that encourage healthy eating, physical activity, stress management, and overall wellbeing (e.g., wellness challenges, onsite movement opportunities, and partnerships such as chiropractic or massage services as available). Staff input informs annual priorities.

Implementation, Assessment, Documentation, & Public Updates

Implementation & Oversight

- The **Wellness Policy Leadership Team** ensures compliance with this policy across nutrition, physical activity, and mental health domains.
- School nutrition staff ensure compliance within food service and report to the **Head of School** (or designee).

Triennial Assessment

At least once every **three years**, MCC will assess wellness policy implementation, including compliance and progress toward goals. The **Food Service Director** (or designee) coordinates the assessment with the Wellness Committee.

Documentation & Public Disclosure

MCC retains documentation to demonstrate compliance, including:

- The current Wellness Policy and **how it is disseminated**;
- The most recent **triennial assessment**;
- Stakeholder engagement and policy update records.

Results of the triennial assessment and updates to this policy will be **posted on the MCC website** and shared with stakeholders via school-wide communications (e.g., email/newsletters). Materials are presented in accessible, culturally and linguistically appropriate formats.

Policy Review & Updates

MCC will update this policy as priorities and community needs evolve, upon completion of each triennial assessment, and when new federal or state guidance is issued. Interim administrative procedures may be updated more frequently to align with day-to-day operations without re-opening the full policy.

Definitions

- **School Day:** From **12:00 a.m.** to **30 minutes after** the end of the official instructional day.
- **Smart Snacks:** USDA standards for foods and beverages sold to students during the school day outside of reimbursable meals.
- **Whole Grain-Rich:** At least 50% whole grain and remaining grains enriched; used to calculate the **80% weekly** requirement.

References (authoritative anchors)

1. **USDA Final Rule (Apr 25, 2024):** *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 DGA.*
2. **USDA Implementation Timeline & Rule Comparison:** Meal-pattern timelines and Smart Snacks changes (incl. bean dip exemption).
3. **USDA Smart Snacks Overview & Guidance.**
4. **Michigan Dept. of Education (2022) Administrative Memo – Non-Compliant Food Fundraisers:** up to two/week per building, one day each.

5. **7 CFR 210.31:** Local School Wellness Policy: content, implementation, triennial assessment, and public updates.
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Living Resource Appendix (online)

Rather than embedding long, aging link lists, MCC will maintain an up-to-date **Wellness Resources** page (nutrition education, Smart Snacks tools, celebration ideas, non-food rewards, activity brain breaks, mental health supports, etc.). The Wellness Committee updates this page at least annually.