



Local School Wellness Policy

School/LEA: Exploration High School (ExHS)

Applies to: All students, staff, and school settings where food is provided or sold and where school-sponsored activities occur (on- and off-campus)

Effective Date: 8/1/2025

1. Purpose

Exploration High School is committed to providing a school environment that supports student health, well-being, and academic success. This Local School Wellness Policy establishes goals and procedures for nutrition, physical activity, and whole-school wellness and ensures compliance with federal requirements for schools participating in USDA Child Nutrition Programs.

ExHS believes that student wellness includes access to nutritious food, opportunities for movement, social-emotional support, and a safe, inclusive school climate. Through this policy, ExHS affirms its commitment to serving students holistically and removing barriers to learning.

2. Leadership and Governance

2.1 Wellness Leadership

The Executive Director (or designee) serves as the Wellness Policy Leader and is responsible for coordinating policy implementation.

Wellness Policy Leader: Mary Wenstrom

Food Service Program Contact: Ro Lin

Health Services Contact (if applicable): Alycia Monserrate

2.2 ExHS Wellness Committee

Exploration High School maintains a Wellness Committee that meets at least twice per school year to guide implementation, monitor progress, and support continuous improvement.

Membership includes, when available and appropriate:

- Students
 - Parents or guardians
 - School food service staff
 - Teachers and school staff
 - School leadership/administration
-

2.3 Public Involvement and Transparency

Exploration High School will:

- Invite families and community members to participate in wellness efforts.
 - Make the current Wellness Policy, implementation plan, and most recent triennial assessment available to the public via the school website and upon request.
-

3. Nutrition Standards and School Meal Environment

3.1 School Meals

Exploration High School operates school meal programs in accordance with USDA and Minnesota Department of Education requirements.

Student Access and Dignity

- Meals are provided in a respectful environment.
- Student eligibility for free or reduced-price meals is kept confidential.
- ExHS makes reasonable efforts to reduce barriers to meal participation, including for students experiencing housing instability or transportation challenges.

Time to Eat

ExHS schedules sufficient time for students to eat meals, with a goal of providing at least 30 minutes for lunch whenever possible. Currently, our lunch period is 45 minutes.

Water Access

Students have free access to potable drinking water throughout the school day and during meal service.

Special Dietary Needs

Meal accommodations are provided for students with disabilities or medical dietary needs in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

3.2 Competitive Foods and Beverages (Smart Snacks)

All foods and beverages sold to students on campus during the school day—including à la carte items, vending, school stores, and food fundraisers—must meet USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards unless an allowable exemption applies.

Fundraisers

Food and beverage fundraisers held during the school day must comply with Smart Snacks standards. ExHS encourages non-food or healthy food fundraisers whenever possible.

3.3 Foods Provided (Not Sold)

For celebrations, meetings, or school-sponsored events where food is provided:

- Healthy options are encouraged (such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and water).
 - Food is not used as a reward or withheld as punishment.
 - Safe food handling and allergy awareness practices are followed.
-

3.4 Food Marketing

Food and beverage marketing on campus during the school day is limited to products that meet Smart Snacks standards.

4. Nutrition Education and Promotion

Exploration High School provides nutrition education that is:

- Age-appropriate and culturally responsive
- Skills-based (label reading, budgeting, meal planning, food preparation)
- Integrated into coursework and real-world learning whenever possible, including project-based and work-based learning experiences

ExHS promotes healthy choices by sharing nutrition information when available and encouraging hydration and balanced meals.

5. Physical Activity and Physical Education

5.1 Physical Education

Exploration High School provides physical education opportunities consistent with graduation requirements and course offerings and promotes physical literacy and lifelong movement.

5.2 Physical Activity Opportunities

ExHS supports physical activity throughout the school day by:

- Encouraging movement breaks during longer instructional periods
 - Providing inclusive opportunities for students of all abilities
 - Supporting extracurricular physical activity when feasible
-

5.3 Safe Transportation and Movement

ExHS collaborates with families and community partners to support safe transportation and mobility options, particularly when community safety conditions require adjustments.

6. Whole-School Wellness Supports

Exploration High School recognizes that wellness includes physical, emotional, and social well-being. The school commits to:

- Trauma-informed practices
 - Positive school climate and belonging
 - Access to counseling and community support services
 - Staff wellness supports
 - Coordinated responses to student needs related to safety, housing, food access, and mental health
-

7. Implementation, Monitoring, and Continuous Improvement

7.1 Implementation Plan

Exploration High School maintains an implementation plan that includes:

- Wellness goals
- Action steps
- Responsible staff
- Timelines
- Documentation of progress

7.2 Annual Notification

At least once per year, ExHS will notify families and the community about:

- **The Wellness Policy**
 - **How to participate in wellness efforts**
 - **Where to access policy documents and assessment results**
-

7.3 Triennial Assessment

At least every three years, ExHS conducts a Wellness Policy assessment that evaluates:

- 1. Compliance with this policy**
- 2. Alignment with model wellness practices**
- 3. Progress toward established goals**

Assessment results are shared publicly.

7.4 Recordkeeping

Exploration High School maintains records demonstrating compliance, including:

- **Current Wellness Policy**
 - **Wellness Committee documentation**
 - **Annual notifications**
 - **Implementation plans**
 - **Triennial assessment reports**
-

8. Policy Review and Updates

This policy is reviewed and updated as needed, including following triennial assessments. Stakeholder input is included in revisions, and updated policies are shared publicly.