

March 23, 2011

ST. BARNABAS SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

Belief Statement

St. Barnabas School sets itself apart by leading the way for Catholic schools in Chicago to focus on total wellness, including body, mind and spirit. We are committed to providing a learning environment that supports and promotes wellness, good nutrition, and an active lifestyle and recognizes the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity and the capacity of students to develop and learn. The entire school environment shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence students' beliefs and habits and promote health and wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity. In addition, school staff shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of life. Our mission is to balance all these needs for the well-being of each child entrusted to our care.

Intent

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a total school environment during the instructional school day that promotes and supports student health and wellness through nutrition and activity, helps to reduce childhood obesity and creates a plan for measuring implementation, including designating one or more persons charged with operational responsibility; and involving parents, students, school food service providers, the school advisory board, school administrators, and the public in developing this policy. For information regarding children with medical conditions that require treatment with medications, such as asthma, food allergies, migraines, etc., please refer to the Medication section of the handbook.

Future recommendations and improvements to the St. Barnabas Wellness Policy are subject to the review of the School board and approval of principal. Any concerns, enhancements and comments relative to this policy need to be submitted in writing to the School Board for review. A response will then be created and returned to the appropriate parties within 30 days of receipt. Exceptions to this improvement process will not receive review, comment or consideration.

Rationale

The link between nutrition and learning is well documented. Healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth and lifelong health and well-being. Healthy eating is demonstrably linked to reduced risk of the development of many chronic diseases. Schools and school communities have a responsibility to help students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to establish and maintain lifelong healthy eating patterns. Well-planned and well-implemented wellness programs have been shown to positively influence children's health.

Schools also have a responsibility to help students establish and maintain lifelong habits of being physically active. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, regular physical activity is one of the most important things people can do to maintain and improve their physical health, mental health

and overall well-being. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of life-threatening illnesses, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer and diabetes.

St. Barnabas School will comply with and exceed the goals for Student Wellness established by the Archdiocese of Chicago, Office of Catholic Schools.

FOOD ALLERGIES

St. Barnabas School cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment for students with life-threatening food-borne allergies. The goal is to minimize the risk of exposure to food allergens within the learning environment that may pose a threat to those students; to educate the students, staff and parents; and to maintain an updated school protocol for addressing the needs of children with allergies. Primary to this goal is to educate students on how to self-manage their allergies. A school-wide effort requires the cooperation of between parents, administration, teachers and students, which includes reviewing this policy anytime food will be present to determine appropriate implementation.

Responsibilities of parents/guardians of Child (ren) with Food Allergies

Parents/Guardians are their children's first teachers. It is important for parents/guardians to educate their food allergic child with regard to risks, reactions and procedures as well as communicate all pertinent information received from the food allergic child's doctors, etc. to the school. Parents/Guardians will assume the following primary responsibility for their child's wellness needs:

- Preparing, role-playing and practicing procedures in advance will help everyone feel prepared in case of an emergency.
- Provide a list of foods and ingredients to avoid as per physician's order.
- Provide allergen-free shelf-stable snack for your child (ren).
- Be willing to go on your child (ren)'s field trips and/or participate in class parties, events, and extra-curricular activities, if possible, and if requested.
- Clearly label your child (ren)'s lunches to avoid mix-up.
- Complete the annual notification (see below) and arrange a meeting with school administration.
- Maintain open communication lines with school administration and teachers.

Annual Notification and Meeting

If a child has any food-borne allergy, including allergies to peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, poppy seeds, shellfish, and/or other dietary items that possess a serious risk of allergic reaction through ingestion or inhalation, parents/guardians must take the following critical steps with respect to communicating with the school.

Parents/Guardians must annually notify St. Barnabas School of their child (ren)'s situation by completing a Food Allergy Action Plan_in addition to medical forms identified in the Medication

section of the handbook, which needs to be signed by the child (ren)'s physician. The Food Action Plan can be located at <http://www.foodallergy.org/files/FAAP.pdf>

A hyperlink to this form is also available on the school website under Food Allergy Action Plan.

Parents/guardians must initiate an annual meeting with the school administration to be held the **week prior to the first day of school**, or within a reasonable amount of time after a new diagnosis or a change with an existing diagnosis. This meeting will engage all parties (parents, administration, teachers, and specials teachers) in a review of the plan as specified in writing by the physician. If parents/guardians do not submit a plan and meet with administration, the school is not responsible for not making reasonable accommodations for any child.

St. Barnabas School will do its best to reasonably meet the needs of children with Food Action Plans, and understands that it will be the responsibility of the parents/guardians to determine if the reasonable accommodations provided make St. Barnabas School an appropriate educational setting for their child(ren).

In the event that a child with a Food Action Plan becomes cleared of their allergy, a written note from the physician must be submitted to the administration to clearly communicate the child's release from any restrictions.

Food Allergy Medication

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians of students in the Main School to:

- Provide Food Allergy emergency medications that are listed on the physician-signed Food Allergy Action Plan. Medication limit per child is two (2) Epinephrine pens and/or Benadryl and will be kept in the Main Office. Parents/guardians are responsible to replace medications after use or upon expiration.
- Upon parents'/guardians' request, students with life-threatening allergies will be allowed to carry their own Epinephrine pens in a designated emergency pack, if age-appropriate and after the written approval from their physician. This is in addition to the aforementioned requirements of keeping medication(s) in the Main Office.

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians of students in the Early Childhood Center to:

- Provide Food Allergy emergency medications that are listed on the physician-signed Food Allergy Action Plan. Medication limit per child is two (2) Epinephrine pens and/or Benadryl and will be kept in the Early Education Building. Parents/guardians are responsible to replace medications after use or upon expiration.

Educate and Empower your Child (ren) with Allergies

It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to educate and empower their child (ren) in the self-management of her/his/their allergy by taking the following steps:

- Reviewing the Food Allergy Action Plan.

- Identifying safe and unsafe foods and asking about ingredients for all food offered. If unsure that the food is allergen-free, the child must know to NOT take or eat the food.
- Discussing strategies for avoiding exposure to unsafe foods/allergens.
- Being aware of the symptoms of an allergic reaction.
- Learning how to read food labels (when age-appropriate).
- Making sure they have their labeled lunch so as to avoid mix-up.
- Understanding the importance of not sharing or trading food with others.
- Teaching the importance of cleansing hands before and/or following snack and lunch time.
- Recognizing the importance of being proactive in the care and management of their allergies and reactions to food allergens, as developmentally appropriate.
- Knowing how and when to tell an adult he/she may be having an allergy-related problem, and the importance of notifying an adult immediately if they eat something they believe may contain the food to which they are allergic, or if they are exposed to an allergen that they know may cause a reaction.
- Carrying Epi-Pen when appropriate.
- If a child chooses not to sit at the allergen-free lunch table, the parents/guardians must instruct their child about how to minimize their risk during lunch.
- Being aware that they have a “Safe Treats Bag” that is labeled with their name for them to consume when others’ snacks or birthday treats may not be safe for them. Their homeroom teacher will keep this bag.
- Understanding that teachers will always default to the “Safe Treats Bag” if the child cannot determine if a snack/ birthday treat is allergen-free and/or if there is any question of food safety.

Guidelines for All School Parents and All Children

As a Catholic school that prides itself on consideration and compassion for one another, all parents/guardians are asked to take the following steps to assist in the education and care of all children:

- Respond cooperatively when requested to eliminate allergens from snacks and foods brought in for parties/celebrations.
- It is appropriate to check with homeroom teacher to understand if there are any students with specific food allergies.
- Clearly label your child's lunch so as to avoid mix-up.
- Inform the teacher prior to the distribution of food products to any child in the school.
- Teach children how to read food labels (when age-appropriate), and to encourage students to pick treats that everyone can enjoy (or select non-food treats instead.)
- Stress the importance of not sharing or trading food with others.
- Reinforce the importance of cleansing hands before and/or following snack and lunch time.
- Respect all classmates, never bully or tease a child with a food allergy or any other type of allergy.
- Respect allergen-free areas and be prepared to move if your child's food is felt to be potentially dangerous to another.

SCHOOL WELLNESS RESPONSIBILITIES

The administration, staff and faculty at St. Barnabas School will assume the following primary responsibility for the wellness needs of all students:

- Teach students that their bodies are a gift from God, and we are all called to take care of ourselves through healthy eating and exercise.
- In order to promote wellness and healthy lifestyles the school will encourage:
 - theme weeks and guest speakers
 - sequential and interdisciplinary nutrition education
 - substance abuse education
 - violence prevention resources
 - self-esteem and anti-bullying programming
 - promote state mandated health screenings and educational programs
 - provide emotional health resources and activities
 - provide safety activities and resources to prevent injuries
- The school will strongly encourage and provide opportunities for all students to cleanse their hands before and after snack/lunch.
- The school will take an active role in assuring students are included in school activities. Students will not be excluded from school activities solely based on Food Allergy Action or Medical Plans provided by their physicians. Best attempts will be made to provide reasonable accommodations for participation.
- Copies of the Food Allergy Action Plan or other Medical Plans will be provided for each teacher and additional copies will be available in the main office and school lunch room.
- On an annual basis, the school will provide education to the faculty and lunchroom volunteers in how to recognize an allergic reaction and how to use an Epinephrine pen.
- The school will store the provided emergency medications as outlined above.
- The school will support parents'/guardians' request for students with life-threatening allergies to carry his/her/their own Epinephrine pens in a designated emergency pack, if appropriate, after the written approval from their physician. This is in addition to the aforementioned requirements of keeping two (2) doses of medication in the main office.
- The school will take an active role in cleaning eating surfaces at lunch times and snack times.
- The school will provide physical education and recess as part of a physical wellness program.
- The school will work with parents/guardians to help students feel included and safe.
- The school will allow healthy snacks provided by the parent(s)/guardian(s) daily for preschool and kindergarten students in addition to their lunch.
- Students are not permitted to share or trade lunch or snack food with one another in the lunchroom, classroom, or while on school-sponsored trips.
- Art, cooking and other educational projects conducted at school should not use any ingredients containing allergen products and will only use food in educational projects when there is no substitute to achieve the lesson's goal.
- Open communication will be maintained with parents/guardians on any potential wellness concerns.

FOOD WELLNESS FOR ALL STUDENTS

To protect all children with allergies and to promote healthy lifestyle choices St. Barnabas School encourages the following:

Birthdays and Holiday Celebrations:

- Parents/guardians will have the option to donate a book, cd, DVD to the McDonald Learning Center in honor of their child(ren)'s birthday.
- Provide non-food items appropriate to the celebration. These items can be passed out in the classroom.
- Edible treats are strongly urged to be healthy and not contain peanuts, tree nuts, dairy or other allergen products as communicated to the parents by the teacher. Edible treats will be distributed in the school cafeteria during lunch time or will be sent home with the students at the end of the school day.
- The focus of classroom celebrations will be on crafts, games, entertainment or other constructive rewards options.
- School will use non-food items as incentives, rewards or awards.
- The parents/guardians of children with food allergies are responsible for providing a "Safe Treats Bag" labeled with the child's name that will be consumed when others' snacks or birthday treats cannot be given to the child with food allergies. This is to be coordinated with the child's homeroom teacher and the food provider.

Fun Food celebrations:

Any Fun Food celebrations are "optional". Box Tops for Education contests are considered a Fun Food Activity. Parents/guardians may determine if any food offered through these events are appropriate for their child (ren).

- Nutritional information and ingredient content can be obtained by contacting the sponsoring organization (i.e. Restaurant's contact information will be provided with Fun Food order forms.).
- All fun food days and box tops for education contests need to be approved by the principal. They will offer healthy options and will be held in the lunchroom.
- A treat from the aforementioned "Safe Treats Bag" provided by the parents/guardians of children with life-threatening allergies will be consumed when an edible treat cannot be given to the child with food allergies.

Lunchroom:

- Nutritional information will be available from the school's hot lunch provider. Such requests can be made to Food Professional Services.

- An allergen-free table will be offered for students with allergies. All students will sit at the regular lunch table unless written documentation stating otherwise from a child's physician is provided.
- All students are encouraged to bring healthy, well balanced lunches.
- A treat from the aforementioned "Safe Treats Bag" provided by the parents/guardians of children with life-threatening allergies will be consumed when an edible treat cannot be given to the child with food allergies.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR ALL STUDENTS

Physical Education and Recess

St. Barnabas School maintains a commitment to provide physical education to kindergarten one class period each week and to students in 1st – 8th grades two class periods each week.

Weather permitting, all students in the main building and early childhood center will have a minimum of 15 minutes of supervised outside recess time. If weather does not allow for recess outside, all students will have time to stretch and relax after lunch in their classroom. Please make sure your child comes appropriately dressed for the weather. Students will go out unless the temperature or wind chill is below 32 degrees, and/or if there is any form of precipitation.

Student responsibility

All students need to make sure they leave the house dressed appropriately for the weather, knowing that they will go out for recess, even if it is a walk around the block.

St. Barnabas will provide our students with physical wellness as part of our goal to develop the entire student. Therefore, per our discipline policy, no student will be held back from physical education or recess due to discipline and or homework issues. Those concerns will be handled according to the policy in the handbook.

In the Classroom Setting

Classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television.

Staff will identify opportunities for physical activity to be incorporated into other subject lessons.