

Wellness Policy of Nasha Shkola Charter School

January, 2018

I. Introduction

Leave all the afternoon for exercise and recreation, which are as necessary as reading. I will rather say more necessary because health is worth more than learning.

Thomas Jefferson

Our philosophy is that wellness is an essential to child development. In all educational planning we do well to remember the purpose of public education, to meet the needs of the learner, the employer and society. In all of these health is the *sine quo non*. Health and wellness programs are not expenditures. They are investments. Whether they take the form of education, enforcement or engineering they are liberating our schools and students from impediments of learning. The brain runs better on whole grains and fresh produce than on malnutrition. The research shows that attention to wellness does not detract from education. It enhances it and contributes to well-rounded education. Children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn and thrive. Good health helps foster student attendance and education. Thus, Nasha Shkola is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children's healthy, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthful eating and physical activity. Therefore, our goals:

- engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, school board members, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing school nutrition and physical activity policies;
- give all students in grades K-8 opportunities, support, and encouragements to be physically active on a regular basis;
- meet the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans for all foods and beverages sold or served at school;
- participate in available federal and state school meal programs to the maximum extent practicable;
- provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and link health education and school meal programs with other school-based activities and events;
- minimize student consumption of sweets while at school;
- encourage parents to have healthy meals at home and provide healthy lunches to students that bring them from home.

II. Detailed Policies

School Meals (breakfast and lunch)

Meals served in school will:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean settings;
- follow nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes (see NSLP below) and regulations including Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act;
- offer a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, both on the salad and with the other lunch options;

- serve only low fat (1%), fat-free milk, and nutritionally-equivalent non-dairy alternatives (as defined by the USDA) as one of the components of the lunch; and
- ensure that half of the served grains are whole grain.

In addition, Nasha Shkola will share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents and students. Such information is available upon request.

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Menus are planned according to NSLP requirements (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp/national-school-lunch-program-nslp>), with each meal consisting of two ounces of meat or meat alternate, two or more servings of different fruits and vegetables, at least one serving of bread or other whole grain product and eight ounces of milk. Serving sizes are those recommended in USDA MyPlate (<https://www.cnpp.usda.gov/myplate>). The serving sizes exemplify for children what a serving should look like. Choices of entrees are offered at each level to address food preferences. Lunches must comply with Dietary Reference Intake (https://ods.od.nih.gov/Health_Information/Dietary_Reference_Intakes.aspx) for key nutrients such as protein, iron, calcium, vitamin A, vitamin C, based on age/grade group. They must also meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (<https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015>), including recommendations for percentage of calories from fat (no more than 30%) and saturated fat (no more than 10%).

Meal Times and Scheduling

Nasha Shkola:

- will provide students with at least 20 minutes of lunch time;
- will schedule lunch times around recess periods;
- should not schedule tutoring or other activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will provide student access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals

Nasha Shkola will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages

Nasha Shkola will discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

Soft Drinks/Beverages/Candies/Nuts

Students **may not** have energy or soft drinks at any time during the school day. Beverages, candy, and other foods are not allowed outside of the lunchroom during the school day. The school encourages a nut-free environment to minimize occasions of allergic reactions.

Breakfast

To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn, Nasha Shkola will encourage parents to provide a healthful breakfast for their children and inform them about it through newsletter articles. Breakfasts provided by Nasha Shkola will follow the guidelines described above.

Snacks

Students are welcome to bring a healthful snack to eat during snack time. Parents are advised to

consider a Smart Snacks in Schools guide (<http://www.eatright.org/resource/food/nutrition/eat-right-at-school/smart-snacks-in-schools>) when preparing snacks for their children. Nasha Shkola encourages parents to send a water bottle to school for a child to use throughout the day.

Celebrations, School Events and Special Occasions

During regular school days Nasha Shkola will limit celebrations initiated and supervised by a teacher and that involve food to no more than one party per class per month. Each party should include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually (see above). At no occasion, including birthday celebrations, are students allowed to bring treats and sweets to share with other students. A wonderful birthday treat is a book in Russian or English that can be donated to the classroom and read to the students. Nasha Shkola will **not** provide foods or beverages at school-organized events outside the school hours such as, but not limited to, New Year celebration, performances, and fundraisings. Parents bringing food or beverages to such events are encouraged to follow the nutrition standards outlined above.

Physical Activity Promotion

For students to receive the nationally recommended amount of daily physical activity (i.e., at least 60 minutes per day) and to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class. Toward that end:

- 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;
- Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate. All students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which Nasha Shkola should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity through the provision of space and equipment.

III. Distribution, Revision, and Contacts

The wellness council is a joint function of administration, teaching faculty, parents and health care providers. To treat mind and body requires expertise from many sources: health educators to survey and advise, health practitioners as gatekeepers of the health care system, parents leaders as opinion makers, and administrators to fit the puzzle together. The Wellness Policy is to be posted on the school website and distributed to parents via email or on paper at the beginning of each school year and after each revision. The policy is to be revised on an annual basis or if requested by parents, teachers, administrators or school authorizing agency (IQS). The request should be directed to the head of the relevant committee or to the Board of Directors. The policy is to be assessed every 3 years, with the assessment initiated by the school administration.

The Wellness Policy was created by the School Wellness Committee^[1] of Nasha Shkola, which also implements, monitors, reviews, and, as necessary, revises school nutrition and physical activity policies on a quarterly basis. Questions and suggestions regarding the Wellness Policy, implementations, and changes should be directed to Alexej Abyzov at aabyzov@mail.ru and Yelena Hardcopf at yelena.hardcopf@nashashkolamn.org.

Revised on January 2018 by the School Wellness Policy Committee including Alexej Abyzov (the head of the committee, parent, and board member), Yelena Hardcopf (the school administrator, parent, and board member), Arthur Bogdanove (a school teacher), and Elizaveta Lindman (a school teacher, parent, and board member).