

**NASHA SHKOLA CHARTER SCHOOL
WELLNESS POLICY**

I. Preamble

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

Nasha Shkola Charter School (hereto referred to as NS or Nasha Shkola) is committed to the optimal development of every student. Nasha Shkola believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, we need to create positive, safe and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism and better performance on cognitive tasks. Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students.¹ In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education and extracurricular activities – do better academically. Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.

This policy outlines NS approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to:

- 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;
- provide access for students to healthy foods throughout the school day in accordance with the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans and Minnesota state nutrition standards
- ensure that students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- give all students in grades K-8 opportunities, support, and encouragements to be physically active before, during and after school;
- 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;
- encourage NS staff to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- encourage parents to have healthy meals at home and provide healthy lunches to students that bring them from home;
- establish and maintain an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy, its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all students, staff and schools in NS. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

II. Nutrition

School Meals (breakfast and lunch)

1. All foods and beverages made available at NS will be consistent with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
 - a. Food and beverages offered over the course of a school week will be nutrient-dense, including whole grain products and fiber-rich fruits and vegetables to provide students a variety of choices to maintain a balanced diet.
 - b. Foods and beverages available during the school day will include a variety of healthy choices that are of excellent quality, appealing to students, and served at proper temperatures.
 - c. Foods and beverages available during the school day minimize the use of trans and saturated fats, sodium and sugars as defined by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

Beverages:

- Allowed: To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day and throughout school building. NS will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. Students will be allowed to bring and carry water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day
- Not allowed: energy or soft drinks at any time during the school day.

Foods:

- Foods and beverages available during the school day will minimize the use of trans and saturated fats, sodium and sugar as defined by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Fruits and/or non-fried vegetables will be offered with each meal. Such items will include, but not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100% fruit and vegetable juice; cooked, dried or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, and canned vegetables.

Portion Sizes:

- Food and beverages will be offered in portion sizes age-appropriate for elementary and middle school students, respectively.

2. Food service personnel will take every measure to ensure that student access to foods and beverages meet or exceed all federal and state guidelines.
3. Food service personnel will adhere to all federal, state, and local food safety and security guidelines.

4. Nasha Shkola Charter School 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. Food service will utilize computer identification and payment systems; provide breakfast meals for kindergarten students at no charge, regardless of income; and promote the availability of school meals to all students.
5. The school will provide student access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.
6. The school will make every effort to provide students with sufficient time to eat after sitting down for school meals and will schedule meal periods at appropriate times during the school day. NS Charter School will:
 - a. Provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
 - b. Schedule meal periods at appropriate times i.e. lunch should be scheduled between 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm; and
 - c. Provide dining areas that are clean and pleasant, and have enough space for seating all students.
7. The school will discourage tutoring, clubs, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities.
8. Given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets, students will be discouraged from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meals or snack times.
9. NS Charter School will 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:
 - a. The school will operate the School Breakfast Program.
 - b. The School will arrange bus schedules and utilize methods to serve school breakfasts that encourage participation.
 - c. The school will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
10. Nasha Shkola will post lunch and breakfast menus on NS website and share information about the nutritional content of meals with parents upon request.

Snacks/Nuts

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.

NS encourages a nut-free environment to minimize occasions of allergic reactions.

Celebrations, School Events and Special Occasions

All foods offered on the school premises will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, including through:

1. Celebration and parties: NS will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas. Healthy party ideas are available from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) and from the [USDA](#). At no occasion, including birthday celebrations, are students allowed to bring treats and sweets to share with other students.
2. Classroom snacks brought by parents. NS will provide to parents a [list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks](#) nutrition standards.
3. Rewards: NS Charter School will limit use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior, and will not withhold food and beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment. Rewards and incentives will be used that do not undermine the health of students and/or reinforce unhealthful eating habits. Non-food rewards and incentives will be used as the first choice to encourage positive behavior. The district will disseminate a list of positive, non-food rewards.

Field Trips.

When planning a field trip that will occur during the scheduled lunch periods the classroom teacher will, to the extent possible, collaborate with Lunch Program Coordinator to provide all students the option of receiving a meal from school; being mindful of the number of students on free/reduced priced meals who may not be able to provide a lunch from home.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

Nasha Shkola is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school premises during the school day support healthy eating. In order to do so, NS will not sell or serve foods and beverages outside of the school meal programs (e.g., “competitive” foods and beverages) including vending machines, school store, snack, and food carts.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program staff (director, coordinator and volunteers) will meet annual continuing education/training requirements in the [USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals](#). These school nutrition personnel will refer to [MDE Training and Professional Standards](#)

III. Physical Activity

1. **Physical Education (P.E.) K-8.** All students in grades K-8, including students with disabilities, special health-care needs, and in alternative educational settings, will receive regular physical education for the entire school year. When possible, the

physical education curriculum should be coordinated with the health education curriculum. Physical education course will be in the environment where students learn, practice and are assessed on developmentally appropriate motor skills, social skills and knowledge. Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (i.e. interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirement. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

2. **Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting.** For students to receive the nationally recommended amount of daily physical activity (i.e. at least 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond PE (Physical Education) education class. Toward that end:
 - Classroom health education will reinforce the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle and reduce sedentary activities such as watching television;
 - Opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons (such as science, math, music, Russian), where appropriate; and
 - Classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.
3. **Daily Recess.** All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, preferably outdoors, during which schools should encourage moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment. Schools will discourage extended periods (i.e. periods of two or more hours) of inactivity.
4. **Physical Activity and Punishment.** Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (i.e. running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (i.e. recess, physical education) as punishment. The school district will discourage tutoring, club or organizational meetings or activities during recess or physical education class times.

IV. Nutritional Education

1. NS Charter School will encourage and support healthy eating by students and engage in nutrition promotion that is:
 - a. Offered as part of core classes. Classes offered throughout the year with information on the topic of nutrition would include Health, P.E., and Science.
 - b. Integrated into other areas of the curriculum such as math, language arts, music, and Russian, where appropriate
2. The staff responsible for nutrition education will be adequately prepared and participate regularly in professional development activities to effectively deliver an accurate nutrition education program.

3. The school cafeteria will serve as a “learning laboratory” to allow students to apply nutrition skills taught in the classroom. The promotion of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low fat dairy products will be encouraged.
4. The school district will provide information to families that encourage them to teach their children about health, nutrition and the importance of daily physical activity.

V. School Food/Nutrition Program Personnel

1. The school will provide healthy and safe school meal program that strictly comply with all federal, state, and local statutes and regulations.
2. The Director of Food Service shall be responsible for the school meal program, whose duties shall include working with the Premier Kitchen catering company (<https://www.premierkitcheninc.com/>) to ensure food and beverage choices are consistent with current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
3. Food and Nutrition Services programs will aim to be financially self-supporting. However, the program is an essential educational support activity. Budget neutrality or profit generation will not take precedence over the nutritional needs of the students. Food and Nutrition Services will ensure that all students have affordable access to the varied and nutritious foods they need.
4. As part of the NS responsibility to operate a food and nutrition service program, the NS will provide continuing professional development for all food and nutrition service personnel & volunteers in NS. Staff development programs will include appropriate certification and/or training programs for the Director, and Food and Nutrition Services Staff and volunteers, according to their levels of responsibility.

VI. Implementation and Monitoring

1. NS Wellness Committee will monitor and evaluate the NS implementation of the Wellness Policy. Once the policy is approved, the Wellness Committee will meet once a year to review and update the policy if needed. The Wellness Committee will be chaired and coordinated by the Food Service Director.
2. After approval by the school board, the Wellness Policy will be distributed to parents and teachers and implemented throughout the school.
3. Staff responsible for the areas outlined within this policy will ensure compliance and will report to the Wellness Committee, as appropriate. An annual report of the NS compliance with the policy will be given to the School Board.
4. **Triennial Progress Assessments:** At least once every three years, the District will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy. NS will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.
5. **Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications:** NS is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. NS will actively communicate ways in which representatives of NSWC and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the

wellness policy. NS will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with School nutrition standards. NS will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on NS website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. NS will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the district and individual schools are communicating important school information with parents.

NS will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. NS will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

VII. School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

Nasha Shkola will convene a representative school wellness committee (hereto referred to as the NSWC) that meets at least once time per year to establish goals for and oversee development, implementation and periodic review, update of this wellness policy (heretofore referred as “wellness policy”), as well as progress made towards meeting goals of the policy.

The NSWC membership will include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: teachers, parents, students, health education teachers, school administrators, school board members, and the general public (community).

Leadership

The NS Executive Director will convene the NSWC facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and will ensure each school’s compliance with the policy: Yelena Hardcopf yelena.hardcopf@nashashkolamn.org

Name	Title / Relationship to the School
Alexej Abyzov	Parent NS School Board Member
Yelena Kurdyumova	Community NS School Board Member
Elizabeth Das	Science & Health Education Teacher
Sergey Porada	Community
Denis Durnev	Community Specialist

ⁱ MacLellan D, Taylor J, Wood K. Food intake and academic performance among adolescents. Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research. 2008;69(3):141-144.