



Stella Niagara Education Park

School Wellness Policy

2018-2019

“To nurture a child’s heart, mind and body for life.”

Outline of Wellness Policy

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I. SNEP Mission Statement

The mission of Stella Niagara Education Park is to instill in our students our Franciscan heritage in an academic atmosphere that nurtures them physically, intellectually, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. This heritage is rooted in an understanding of the individual as unique, respected, and cherished. Stella Niagara Education Park is a community sharing a purpose and interest both in individual achievement and social responsibility.

II. SNEP Mission Statement on Health and Wellness

The school administration, faculty, food service staff and the Stella Parent Partnership are committed to and work together to provide a school environment that promotes and protects children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating habits, physical activity, connection with nature and the outdoors, and development of healthy social skills.

III. Health and Wellness Education

Personal Health and Nutrition Education are taught at each grade level as part of a comprehensive, standards-based curriculum for K-8 to provide students with knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health.

Grade 5 is the targeted year for the D.A.R.E. program that is conducted by our local police agency.

MILK MAGIC is presented every other year to Montessori through Grade 4

Health Education – Grades 7 & 8

Grades 7 & 8 take a 40 week Health class conducted by the Physical Education teacher. Units that are taught include:

- Body Organization
- Body Systems
- Food and Nutrition
- Disease and the Body's Defenses
- Stress Management
- Problem Solving/Communication Skills

Mental Health Topics

- Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, Vaping
- Eating Disorders
- Anxiety and Depression
- Bipolar Disorder
- Health and the Environment
- First Aid

Physical Education PK - 8

All students are scheduled for weekly physical education classes:
90 minutes Grades 4-8 - 120 minutes Grades K-3 students.

- All students from Montessori (3-4 yrs), K – 8 learn basic motor and manipulative skills. They will attain competency in a variety of physical activities and proficiency in a few select complex motor and sports activities. Our students will learn the proper way to maintain personal fitness and ways they can improve cardio-respiratory endurance, flexibility, muscular strength, endurance and body composition.
- Students will be able to demonstrate responsible personal and social behavior while engaged in physical activity. They will understand that physical activity provides the opportunity for enjoyment, challenge, self-expression, and communication.
- Students will be able to identify safety hazards and react effectively to ensure a safe and positive experience for all involved in class.
- Students will be aware of and able to access opportunities available to them within their community to engage in physical activity. They will be informed consumers and able to evaluate facilities and programs. Students will be aware of some career options in the field of physical fitness and sports.
- All students in Grades 1-8 participate in an eight-week swim unit conducted in our pool. These classes cover basic swimming skills to advanced strokes. They also cover pool safety and well as open water safety.

Outdoor Education PK - 8

- All students (Montessori, PK, K-8) meet for outdoor education class each week. Outdoor education is integrated with core curriculum subjects connecting learning in the classroom to outdoor experiential learning. Movement outside of the school building is a key component of outdoor education throughout all seasons. Lessons incorporate physical activity through exploration, free play, games, gardening, hiking and snowshoeing.
- All students develop an understanding of where the food they eat comes from through connections made between science and outdoor education lessons. Our students learn how plants grow and actually grow plants from seed, both in the school garden and in the building. The students help maintain the garden by caring for the crops they have planted. Our focus includes growing a variety of crops to expose our students to new foods, and growing crops which will be ready for harvest during the school year. Each spring, we celebrate the harvest of spring crops such as varieties of lettuce, radishes, and carrots. For the last weeks of the school year, a salad bar is provided from our garden for students to enjoy. In the fall, we harvest apples from the orchard and celebrate by making applesauce, apple butter and apple pies for Thanksgiving.
- Research in many fields of the social and medical sciences support achievement of higher levels of health and well-being in people (of all ages) who have access to nature and experience nature in their daily lives. Studies focused on the health and well-being of children reveal that outdoor physical activity, both structured and unstructured, leads to increases in physical activity and healthy weights, higher academic achievement, and a reduction in symptoms associated with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. It has also been found that children who are active outdoors are more likely to be adults that are active outdoors. “Green exercise” occurs outside in nature and is associated with a greater feeling of enjoyment, energy, vitality, restoration, and self-esteem. Health benefits of exposure to nature and experiences

outdoors include lower rates of heart disease, stroke, obesity, depression, an increase in the ability to cope with stressful events, and better immune system functioning.

Mental Health PK-8

Mental health is a critical part of overall health and well-being. Mentally healthy children have a positive quality of life and function well at home, in school, and in the community. It is important to learn healthy social skills and how to cope with challenging situations.

As part of overall health and wellness, mental health includes:

- A sense of self-esteem and confidence
- The ability to identify, express, and regulate emotions
- The ability to set and achieve goals
- Recognizing one's strengths and creative skills
- The ability to feel and express empathy for others
- The ability to create and maintain relationships

The Coordinator of Academic Affairs is a certified school counselor and is available to the students as well as teachers, staff and parents. In addition to personal or small group counseling, this position also supports the general mental health goals of the school.

The school counselor conducts weekly classes for all grades and supports students in the development of:

- Positive routines and practices
- Physical activity
- Good nutrition
- Stress management skills
- Positive relationships
- Self-awareness

The school counselor's role in the school is to

- Foster warm and caring relationships
- Promote a positive school climate and culture
- Support development of social emotional skills, and help-seeking behaviors
- Provide support to students with mental health concerns of self, friends, and family

Physical Activity PK - 8

All students have a daily 20-25 minute outdoor recess period, weather permitting.

Exercise and movement are deemed important throughout the school day and teachers build in such activities as brisk walks and brain gym.

Students in all grades change classes throughout the day which provides more walking time and includes climbing stairs. Taking walks, indoors and outdoors, is another way students and teachers can take advantage of the Stella Niagara campus for the health benefits associated with movement.

IV. Nutrition

School Lunch Program

Stella Niagara Education Park participates in the New York State Education Department Child Nutrition Program. SNEP offers a lunch program according to local, state and federal guidelines.

The food service staff and administration are committed to:

- Preparing meals according to HAACP regulations and the school's Food Safety Plan. *See attached Food Safety Program
- Preparing and presenting appealing entrees and a la carte items
- Serving meals in a clean and pleasant setting in the dining room
- Providing adequate time for students to eat lunch
- Providing and participating in professional training in operating the food service program
- Providing meals according to Child Nutrition Program guidelines, thus promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity

School-wide Nutrition Policies

- In addition to teaching nutrition in the classroom SNEP encourages students, teachers and parents to model healthy eating habits.
- In the primary classrooms where snack is a daily activity, parents are asked to provide healthy and nutritious items for the students.
- SNEP encourages classroom celebrations that involve food to include nutritious items and limit sugars, fats and soda.

Water

- Students are educated on the importance of hydration.
- Free, safe and unflavored water is made available to the students on the first and third floor water fountains.
- Students are permitted to have reusable water bottles and a water station for filling bottles is near the Children's Dining Room and on the third floor corridor
- Water is served and available to the students during lunch.
- When having an outdoor event, such as Spirit Day, large containers of fresh water are made available on the playing fields.
- A water fountain is outside the gymnasium for student use during physical education classes, after-school practices and athletic events.

Campus Store

- A campus store is maintained for students. They may purchase snacks and juice drinks after 3:00 pm.
- Parent volunteers manage the campus store, and stock nutritious snacks and beverages that are aligned to the Smart Snacks guidelines. Students may purchase snacks from the school store after 3:00 pm, but not during the school day.

V. Community Involvement

The following entities/persons are involved in the development of Stella Niagara Education Park's Wellness Policy.

Principal
School Lunch Personnel
Director of Finance/School Lunch Program
School Counselor
Physical Education/Health Teacher
Outdoor Education Coordinator
Teachers
Stella Parent Partnership (our version of PTA)
Athletic Committee (PE teacher & parents)

Ultimately, the SNEP Board of Directors approves and supports the initiatives brought forth by the above.

VI. Ongoing Evaluation and Assessment

Stella Niagara Education Park's Wellness Policy is part of our annual evaluation process. All the entities and personnel stated above have input as to needs and changes in policies and procedures.

The Wellness Policy is published on our website.