Wellness Policy

The Gospel Motivates:
As leaders of Lutheran schools, we believe that God created us and gives us all things including our health. Therefore, we thank God for the gift of life and health He has given us–imperfect as it may be with problems of illness and diseases as a result of sin. But knowing what God has done for us through Jesus Christ–the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation–our response is to care for the body that is on loan to us as a way of thanking and praising God. If we view our bodies as His temple, we can begin to see the importance of daily maintenance in order to keep it usable for his service. By keeping our bodies well-maintained and filled with the right kinds of fuel needed to sustain us, we will be ready at a moment's notice for the demands and tasks He is calling us to do.

("Adapted from "Fill'er Up-With Good Food," by Steve Grunewald, the writer/editor of Better Health, a quarterly wellness letter published by Concordia Plan Services of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and published in Shaping the Future, a publication of the Lutheran Education Association, Winter, 2005.)

Purpose:
Zion Lutheran School will provide an environment where students can learn and succeed by supporting their physical, mental, and emotional health.

Wellness Leadership:
The Wellness Leadership committee oversees the implementation of our school wellness policy. The committee consists of the following participants:

- Principal
- School nutrition/food service staff
- Teachers and other school staff
- School nurse
- Students
- Parents/Guardians
- School board members
- Parents and Teachers of Lutheran Schools committee members
- Community representatives

The Wellness Leadership committee will encourage meaningful participation by these groups.

Nutrition Education:
Zion Lutheran School will provide all children an education that is interactive and teaches the skills they need to adopt healthy eating behaviors. The school will:

- Include nutrition and physical education in the school's curriculum.
- Promote health education and making healthy decisions as appropriate throughout the other curricula areas.
- Present healthy choices in other events sponsored by the school.
- Offer training opportunities to all staff who provide nutrition education in the classroom and/or the lunchroom.

- Involve the parents, students, and the community in nutrition education activities.

Nutrition Promotion:
Zion Lutheran School promotes healthy schools by supporting wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity as a part of the total learning environment. The school supports a healthy environment where children learn and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices. By facilitating learning through the support and promotion of good nutrition and physical activity, schools contribute to the basic health status of children. Improved health optimizes student performance and ensures that no child is left behind.

School Meals:
Zion Lutheran School will provide meals that meet applicable federal and state nutrition guidelines. The school will:

- Encourage students to participate in the lunch program.
- Ensure all students have access to healthy food choices.
- Provide and maintain appropriate food-safety and sanitation practices.
- Encourage adequate time (minimum of 20 minutes) for students to eat lunch and socialize in the designated cafeteria area.
- Provide free drinking water during all lunch periods.
- Protect the privacy of students participating in the free and reduced price meal program.
- Monitor lunches brought from homes, and encourage families to provide nutritious meals.

Zion Lutheran School doesn't allow vending machines, snack bars, and/or school stores. During school sponsored activities, healthy alternatives will be offered in the concession stands, so that parents and students can make choices.

Meal Environment:
Zion Lutheran School provides students with a clean, safe, and accessible lunchroom. It's encouraged that the lunchroom has:

- Adequate space to eat, and pleasant surroundings.
- Adequate time for meals (minimum of 20 minutes from the time they are seated.)
- Convenient access to hand washing facilities before meals.
- Students are encouraged to eat foods, but not forced to eat.
- Access to drinking water.

Beverages:
Zion Lutheran School will provide beverages that meet applicable federal and state nutrition guidelines. The school will:

- Encourage the availability of beverages that support healthy hydration.
- Sell and distribute milk during lunch periods.
- Provide reasonable access to drinking water during meals and at other appropriate times, including but not limited to during physical education and physical activity.
- Permit students to carry and use water bottles in accordance with school procedures.

Classroom Celebrations/Rewards:
Zion Lutheran School will first and foremost encourage student participation, social interaction, and educational activities rather than the consumption of food. When food and beverages are provided during classroom celebrations, school-sponsored events, and other activities involving food and beverages. The school will:

- Limit the availability of beverages that are high in added sugars, or caffeine.
- Offer water as the preferred beverage.
- Encourage and promote nutritious foods.
- Consider any known food allergies, medical conditions, and dietary restrictions.
- Encourage non-food alternatives.

Physical Education:
Zion Lutheran School teaches children the importance of exercise and wellness, and exposes students to a wide range of physical activities and skills in order for students to be able to develop the knowledge and skills to be physically active for life. The school will:

- Include physical activity in the school's daily education program.
- Offer a variety of physical activities outside of the daily education program, including extra-curricular after school programs.
- Work with the community to provide a safe walking and bike route for students to get to and from school.

Staff Wellness:
Zion Lutheran School recognizes that school employee wellness can contribute to a healthy school environment. During school hours, staff will model healthy behaviors:

- Seek out healthy food and beverage choices
- Physical activity
- Nutrition education
- Wellness programs
- Stress-management activities

Implementation and Evaluation:
Zion Lutheran School will communicate our wellness policy to our staff, students, families, and community members. The policy will be available on our school website, our school communication system, as well as, readily accessible in the school office.

Review and Revision:
Zion Lutheran School will review the policy in conjunction with the required triennial assessment. Revisions may be made more frequently if Nebraska Department of Education requirements change, and/or the Wellness Leadership committee identifies areas needing improvement.