Bishop Walsh Wellness and Nutrition Policy

1. School Wellness Council

Bishop Walsh School will maintain a School Wellness Committee that meets at least twice each school year. Membership will be open to the public. The school will actively invite participation from the following groups:

a. Parents and guardians
b. Students
c. The school food authority and school nutrition staff
d. Physical education teachers and health educators
e. School health professionals, such as the school nurse, counselor, or psychologist
f. School administrators
g. Representatives of the school governing body
h. The general public and community partners, including the local health department

The committee will participate in developing, implementing, periodically reviewing, and updating this policy, monitor implementation, and prepare the triennial assessment. The Principal will serve as the official responsible for ensuring school compliance and may designate a wellness contact to coordinate activities. The school will publicly identify the responsible official and wellness contact through its website and annual wellness notice.

2. Nutrition Promotion and Education Goals

Bishop Walsh School will teach and model healthy eating through the following goals, which draw on evidence-based strategies.

a. Nutrition education will be integrated into the health education curriculum and, where appropriate, into other subject areas, and will align with the Maryland health education standards.
b. Students will learn skills needed to make healthy food choices, including reading food labels and understanding portion sizes.
c. Schools will promote fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat and fat-free dairy, and water through cafeteria displays, taste tests, school gardens, and farm-to-school activities.
d. Schools will provide a clean, safe, and pleasant dining space and will give students enough time to eat, with at least 10 minutes for breakfast and 20 minutes for lunch once seated, as recommended by national guidance.
e. Schools will work to schedule lunch near the middle of the school day and will avoid scheduling tutoring, club meetings, or other activities during meal periods that would prevent students from eating.
f. Information about nutrition and healthy living will be shared with families through newsletters, the school website, and school events.

Nutrition education goal: Each school year, students will receive nutrition education through health instruction and at least one practical learning activity, such as reading food labels, planning a balanced meal, or participating in a lesson with Maryland Cooperative Extension. Teachers will document the activities for the annual wellness review.

Nutrition promotion goal: Each school year, the cafeteria and school staff will conduct at least two activities that encourage healthy choices, such as a fruit or vegetable taste test, a cafeteria display highlighting nutritious choices, or a farm-to-school activity. The school will share at least one nutrition or healthy eating message with families each semester. The committee will review an activity log and available student feedback annually.

Bishop Walsh collaborates very closely with Maryland Cooperative Extension to teach and promote a healthy lifestyle.

3. Nutrition Goals and Guidelines

In the interest of influencing student behavior regarding nutrition:

a. Bishop Walsh School cafeteria will prepare and serve school meals that meet the nutrition standards established by the USDA and MSDE. Child nutrition programs are accessible to all enrolled children.
b. Food and beverages, including candy, will not be used as rewards, incentives, or prizes for academic performance or good behavior, or as punishment. Staff and school organizations will use non-food recognition and rewards. Distribution of candy during the school day is discouraged.
c. Meals served through the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program will meet the applicable federal school meal nutrition standards and Maryland requirements. Foods and beverages sold separately from reimbursable meals will meet the Smart Snacks in School standards and the Maryland Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School.

4. Food & Beverage Marketing

Marketing and advertising on the school campus during the school day are permitted only for foods and beverages that meet the Maryland Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School and the federal Smart Snacks in School standards. This applies to posters, vending machine fronts, scoreboards, cups, menu boards, school equipment, school publications, and school-sponsored promotions. The Principal or designee will review new advertising, sponsorships, and renewals for compliance. Existing permanent materials will be addressed when replaced or renewed, consistent with applicable requirements. The school will encourage positive messages about healthy foods and physical activity.

a. Elementary school: The school food service program will approve and provide all food and beverage sales to students. All items sold outside reimbursable school meals must meet the Smart Snacks standards and Maryland Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School. Candy that does not meet these standards may not be sold.
b. Middle and high school: All foods and beverages sold to students outside reimbursable school meals, including a la carte snacks, vending machines, student stores, and fundraising sales on campus during the school day, must meet the Smart Snacks standards and Maryland Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School. Candy that does not meet these standards may not be sold. For these requirements, the school day extends from midnight before the school day until 30 minutes after the official school day ends. School-sponsored programs after this period will continue to offer food and beverages consistent with these nutrition standards.

5. Health Education, Physical Education, and Activities

All students in grades K through 12, including students with disabilities and special health care needs, will receive regularly scheduled health and physical education. Physical education will be inclusive and adapted as needed. Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

6. Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting

a. Physical education courses will be an environment where students learn, practice, and are assessed on developmentally appropriate motor skills, social skills, and knowledge.
b. Provide a daily recess period, which is not used as a punishment or a reward. Consider planning recess before lunch since research indicates that physical activity before lunch can increase nutrient intake and reduce waste.
c. Teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons as appropriate.

7. Daily Recess

All elementary and middle school students will have at least 20 minutes a day supervised recess, preferably outdoors. During activities, such as mandatory school-wide testing, students should be given periodic breaks during which they are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.

8. Physical Activity and Discipline

Teachers and other school personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups, etc.) or withhold recess for disciplinary reasons.

9. Parent and Community Involvement

a. Partnership between parents and families will continue to be strengthened.
b. The school will continue collaborating with Maryland Cooperative Extension and the PTO to educate students and parents about making better nutritional choices.
c. Success of family involvement will be monitored by the wellness committee through email, surveys, and phone calls.

At the start of each school year and before each wellness committee meeting or policy review, the school will invite families, students, school staff, the school governing body, school health professionals, physical education teachers, school nutrition staff, and the general public to participate. Invitations will be posted on the school website and shared through schoolwide email and the school newsletter. Website invitations will be accessible to community members.

Invitations will describe opportunities to help develop, implement, periodically review, and update the policy; give meeting dates, times, and participation details; and explain how to submit comments or volunteer through the school office or the publicly identified wellness contact. Comments may be submitted even by people unable to attend a meeting. The committee will consider stakeholder input and retain invitations, attendance records, meeting notes, and a record of comments and resulting recommendations.

10. Other School-Based Activities that Promote Student Wellness

Health services: The school will provide health appraisals, hearing and vision screenings, and referrals as appropriate to student needs and applicable school health requirements.

a. Social, emotional, and mental health: School will promote a safe and supportive climate, provide access to counseling and mental health supports, and teach social and emotional skills.

Staff wellness: The school will encourage and support wellness activities and resources for employees.

a. Family and community engagement: Schools will partner with families, the local health department, and community organizations to reinforce healthy habits.
b. Sleep, hygiene, and safety: Health education will address sleep, hand washing, injury prevention, and avoiding tobacco, vaping, alcohol, and other drugs.

Other school wellness goals: Each school year, the school will offer at least one family or community wellness education activity, share information on counseling and mental health supports with families and students, and provide staff with at least one wellness resource or activity. Health education will include sleep, hygiene, safety, and substance-use prevention. The committee will annually review activity records, communications, and participation or feedback to assess progress and identify improvements.

11. To Accomplish These Goals

a. Child Nutrition Programs comply with federal, state, and local requirements. Child Nutrition Programs are accessible to all children.
b. Patterns of meaningful physical activity connect to student lives outside of physical education.
c. All school-based activities are consistent with local wellness policy goals.
d. Foods and beverages sold to students on campus during the school day must meet the Smart Snacks standards and Maryland Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School. Foods and beverages provided without charge at school parties and celebrations will be consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans, emphasize nutritious choices, and take student food allergies into account.
e. All foods made available on campus adhere to food safety and security guidelines.
f. The school environment is safe, comfortable, pleasing, and allows time and space for eating meals. Food and/or physical activity is not used as a reward or punishment.
g. Bishop Walsh will provide information to families that encourages healthy habits and nutritious meals at home.
h. Students are encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast.
i. The school will engage in community outreach to help plan and engage in activities centered around healthy eating and exercise.

12. Implementation, Monitoring, and Accountability

The Principal or designee will ensure that Bishop Walsh School complies with this policy, coordinate an annual implementation review with the School Wellness Committee, and provide an annual progress report to the school governing body. School nutrition staff will monitor meal and competitive food standards; teachers and activity leaders will implement the provisions applicable to their programs.

At least once every three years, the School Wellness Committee, under the direction of the Principal or designee, will conduct and document a triennial assessment. The assessment will evaluate (1) the

extent to which Bishop Walsh School complies with this policy, (2) how this policy compares to a model local school wellness policy, and (3) progress made in attaining the goals of this policy. The assessment will identify the model policy or assessment tool used, summarize evidence for each component, and identify improvements needed. The school will make the completed assessment available to the public on its website and provide it to MSDE as required.

The school will update or modify this policy as appropriate based on annual reviews, triennial assessment results, stakeholder input, changes in health priorities and scientific evidence, and new state or federal guidance.

13. Public Notification and Records

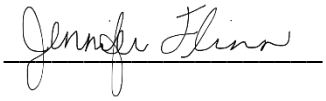
At least annually, the Principal or designee will post the current policy, a summary of its implementation and progress toward goals, any updates, and the most recent triennial assessment on the school website. The school will notify families and staff through a schoolwide email and a notice in the school newsletter explaining where to find these materials and how to request a paper copy through the school office. Public website notices will also explain how community members can obtain the materials and participate in wellness planning. Records kept for MSDE administrative review will include:

a. A copy of the current wellness policy
b. Documentation on how the policy and assessments are made available to the public
c. The most recent triennial assessment of implementation
d. Documentation of efforts to review and update the policy, including who was involved and how stakeholders were told they could participate
e. Annual implementation and progress summaries; committee invitations, meeting records, and stakeholder input; and records supporting nutrition promotion, nutrition education, and other wellness activities.

Component	Key requirement	Responsible party
Wellness Committee	Open membership with required stakeholder groups; meets at least twice a year	Principal and committee chair
Nutrition standards	School meals and all other foods sold during the school day meet federal and Maryland standards	School food authority and Principal
Marketing	Only compliant foods and beverages marketed on campus during the school day	Principal
Physical education and activity	Standards-based physical education and daily activity opportunities	Principal and physical education staff

Triennial assessment	Compliance, comparison to a model policy, and progress reported every three years	School Wellness Committee
Public notification	Policy and assessments posted at least annually	Principal or designee

Revised on: 11/4/2026

Approval by Principal, Jennifer Flinn:  Date: 11/9/26