BELIEF STATEMENT

Nachusa Lutheran Home is committed to providing a learning environment that supports and promotes wellness, good nutrition, and an active lifestyle and recognizes the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity and the capacity of students to develop and learn. The entire school environment and treatment milieu is aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence students’ beliefs and habits and promote health and wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity. In addition, school staff shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

INTENT

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a total school environment that promotes and supports student health and wellness, helps to reduce childhood obesity and meets the requirements of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 and the Illinois School Code, including, without limitation, goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness; nutrition guidelines for all foods available during the school day; a plan for measuring implementation including designating one or more persons charged with operational responsibility; and involving parents, students, school food service providers, the school board, school administrators, and the public in developing this policy.\(^2,3\)

RATIONALE

Nachusa Lutheran Home recognizes the role schools can play in health promotion. Research indicates that a vast number of children are inactive and do not eat well. The result is an alarming 16 percent of children and adolescents are overweight – a three-fold increase since 1980. Congress passed the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 on June 30, 2004. This law requires local education agencies participating in a program authorized by the National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to develop a local wellness policy. The objectives of Nachusa Lutheran Home’s wellness policy are to improve the school nutrition environment, promote student health and reduce childhood obesity. This wellness policy also ensures compliance with Public Act 094-0199 requiring the Illinois State Board of Education to establish a state goal that all districts have a wellness policy.

Nachusa Lutheran Home has developed this wellness policy because the link between nutrition and learning is well documented. It is our belief that healthy eating patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth and lifelong health and well-being. Healthy eating is demonstrably linked to reduced risk for mortality and development of many chronic diseases. Schools and school communities have a responsibility to help students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to establish and maintain lifelong healthy eating patterns. Well-planned and well-implemented wellness programs have been shown to positively influence children’s health. Nachusa
Lutheran Home is committed to helping clients and students establish and maintain lifelong habits of being physically active.

GOALS FOR NUTRITION EDUCATION AT NACHUSA LUTHERAN HOME

- Students in preschool through grade 12 shall receive nutrition education as part of a sequential program that is coordinated within a comprehensive health education curriculum. The program shall be designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt healthy eating behaviors and aimed at influencing students’ knowledge, attitudes and eating habits. Special emphasis should be placed on nutrition education in preschool through primary grades as eating habits are established at a young age. The curriculum shall be consistent with and incorporate relevant Illinois Learning Standards.

- To maximize classroom time and to achieve positive changes in students’ eating behaviors, nutrition education shall be integrated into the standards-based lesson plans of other school subjects like math, science, language arts, physical education, health, family and consumer science and social sciences.

- To achieve positive changes in students’ eating behaviors, it is recommended that a minimum of fifty contact hours of nutrition education opportunities be provided to students each year. Contact hours may include a combination of classroom instruction; nutrition education provided in the cafeteria; or health fairs, field trips and assemblies providing nutrition education.

- The nutrition education program shall include enjoyable interactive activities such as contests, promotions, taste testing, field trips and school gardens.

GOALS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Students/clients participate in daily physical education that enables them to achieve and maintain a high level of personal fitness; emphasizes self-management skills including energy balance (calories in minus calories out).

- Nachusa Lutheran Home ensures that all students/clients participate in healthy physical activity for a minimum of 225 minutes per week (National Association for Sport & Physical Education recommendations). Special emphasis is placed on promoting an active lifestyle. Accommodations shall be made for students with disabilities, 504 plans, and other limitations.

- Students/clients are provided opportunities for physical activity through a range of before- and after-school programs including intramurals, interscholastic athletics, and physical activity clubs.

- Because students should engage in a minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity a day, Nachusa Lutheran Home ensures that physical education activities are provided beyond the school day.

GOALS FOR OTHER SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO PROMOTE STUDENT WELLNESS

Consistent School Activities and Environment – Healthy Eating:

- Nachusa Lutheran Home shares information about the nutritional content of school meals with students/clients, family and school staff.

- School meals are served in clean, safe and pleasant settings with adequate time provided for students to eat, at a minimum, in accordance with state and federal standards and guidelines.

- All food service personnel have adequate pre-service training and regularly participate in professional development activities that provide strategies for providing tasty, appealing and healthy school meals.

- Nachusa Lutheran Home works with suppliers to obtain foods and beverages that meet the nutrition requirements of school meals and nutrition standards for those sold individually.
• The food services staff at Nachusa Lutheran Home work closely with unit staff to reinforce nutrition instruction and foster an environment where students/clients can learn about and practice healthy eating.
• Nachusa Lutheran Home ensures that student access to foods and beverages meets federal, state and local laws and guidelines.
• To reduce competition with nutritionally balanced school meals and enhance student safety, students/clients are not permitted to leave campus grounds to purchase foods or beverages.
• Nachusa Lutheran Home promotes nutritious food and beverage choices consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and Food Guidance System (MyPyramid) such as fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods and whole grain products.
• Nutrition education is provided by trained and well-supported staff with adequate pre-service and in-service training.
• All foods and beverages made available at Nachusa Lutheran Home comply with the federal, state and local food safety and sanitation regulations.
• For the safety and security of food, access to any area involved in storage, preparation or service of food at Nachusa Lutheran Home is limited to authorized personnel.

Consistent School Activities and Environment – Physical Activity:
• Physical education classes have a student to staff ratio comparable to those in other curricular areas.
• Nachusa Lutheran Home limits extended periods of inactivity.
• Nachusa Lutheran Home has developed community partnerships with other child-serving organizations to provide students/clients with opportunities to be active.
• Physical activity facilities and equipment at Nachusa is inspected regularly to ensure safety.
• Students/clients participate in daily physical education that enables them to achieve and maintain a high level of personal fitness.

Food or Physical Activity as a Reward or Punishment:
• Nachusa Lutheran Home does not prohibit meals as a form a punishment and does not implement strenuous physical activity as punishment.

NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR ALL FOODS AND BEVERAGES AVAILABLE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

• Nachusa Lutheran Home offers a variety of age-appropriate, appealing foods and beverage choices and employs food preparation, purchasing and meal planning practices consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
• Nutritious and appealing foods and beverages, such as fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods and whole grain products, are available wherever and whenever food is sold or otherwise offered at Nachusa Lutheran Home.

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL MEALS

School meals served are consistent with the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and/or meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements and regulations for the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program and all applicable state and local laws and regulations.
MONITORING:

To ensure and certify that claims are based on a daily meal count by category taken at point of service, Nachusa will work in cooperation with the designated Principal Operations Consultant associated with the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The primary focus of this interaction will be to ensure that regular annual reviews are scheduled and conducted by February 1st of each year per the NSLP standard. Annual reviews will be scheduled and conducted in order to demonstrate Nachusa’s program compliance with Federal and State program regulations.

Nachusa is also utilizing the services of a Licensed Dietitian who is assisting in the ongoing monitoring of the dietary program at Nachusa. The Dietitian is providing the following services to ensure that Nachusa’s program is in compliance with Federal and State program regulations:

1. The Dietician agrees to plan and provide for the preparation of well-balanced menus for regular and special diets.
2. The Dietician agrees to develop and coordinate nutritional assessments of residents.
3. The Dietician agrees to make recommendations to the Program Director or designee as needed to maintain standards.
4. The Dietician agrees to monitor the maintenance of high standards of orderliness and sanitation requirements by all licensure and accreditation departments.
5. The Dietician agrees to perform other related tasks as necessary or assigned.