

Wellness Policy

Our beliefs regarding nutrition and physical activity:

Whereas, children need access to healthful foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn, and thrive;

Whereas, good health fosters student attendance and education;

Whereas, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades, and physical inactivity and excessive calorie intake are the predominant causes of obesity;

Whereas, heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States, and major risk factors for those diseases, including unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, and obesity, often are established in childhood;

Whereas, 33% of high school students do not participate in sufficient vigorous physical activity and 72% of high school students do not attend daily physical education classes;

Whereas, only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) eat a healthy diet consistent with *MyPlate*

Whereas, nationally, the items most commonly sold from school vending machines, school stores, and snack bars include low-nutrition foods and beverages, such as soda, sports drinks, imitation fruit juices, chips, candy, cookies, and snack cakes;

Whereas, school districts around the country are facing significant fiscal and scheduling constraints; and

Whereas, community participation is essential to the development and implementation of successful school wellness policies;

Thus, Vertus Charter School is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.

Therefore, it is the policy of Vertus Charter School that:

- Inform and update the public (including parents, students, and others in the community) about the content of the local wellness policies.
- Include nutrition guidelines to promote student health and reduce childhood obesity for all foods available in each school district.
- All students will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Students will have access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students.
- Vertus will participate in available federal school meal programs: the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program (including after-school snacks),

- Schools will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

TO ACHIEVE THESE GOALS:

I. School Health Council

A School Health Council will be established, consisting of staff, student, food service and parent representatives. The School Health Council will work to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The council will also serve as a resource for implementing these policies.

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Served on Campus

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs will:

- be appealing and attractive to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk;

Breakfast: To 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:

- Vertus Charter School will offer all students free breakfast.
- Vertus Charter School will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals: Vertus Charter School offers all students free meals while at school to remove the stigma associated with free and reduced price lunch, as well as to ensure that all students have eaten nutritious meals in order to succeed in the classroom.

Meal Times and Scheduling:

Vertus Charter School:

- will provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- serves breakfast between 8:40 and 9:00 and lunch between 12:20 and 1:20;
- provides students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing throughout the school day.



Foods and Beverages Sold Individually:

Vertus Charter School:

- Does not provide any vending machines or allow any food to be sold individually.

Snacks: Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and 100% juice as the primary beverage.

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion: Vertus Charter School intends to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Vertus Charter School will engage in nutrition promotion that:

- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health enhancing nutrition practices;
- links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition related community services;

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 physical education class. Toward that end:

- opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- staff will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Communications with Parents: Vertus Charter School will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children.

Vertus Charter School will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school.

Staff Wellness: Vertus Charter School values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Vertus understands that as a school serving active boys regular physical activity is important for student's health, well-being and academic progress. Students will engage in regular physical activity throughout the day. Vertus will offer for-credit physical in accordance with its charter.

