	SUBJECT **STUDENT WELLNESS POLICY (FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAM)**		
DATE ISSUED 03/03/11	DATE REVISED 04/20/2016; 01/23/2020; 03/04/2021; 01/27/2022; 01/26/2023; 03/06/2024; 06/25/2025; 03/12/2026		NOVA POLICY #
ISSUED BY	REVIEWED BY	APPROVED BY NOVA BOARD	COA POLICY #

SUBJECT

Student Wellness Policy (Federal Nutrition Program)

POLICY STATEMENT

The NOVA Academy Early College High School ("NOVA Academy" or the "Charter School") Governing Board recognizes the link between student health and learning and desires to provide a comprehensive program promoting healthy eating and physical activity for all students. NOVA Academy believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, we need to create positive, safe and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students. In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education and extracurricular activities – do better academically. Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance.

The Executive Director or designee shall build a coordinated school health system that supports and reinforces health literacy through health education, physical education,

social emotional training, nutrition services, counseling services, health promotion for staff, a safe and healthy school environment and parent/guardian and community involvement.

This Policy outlines NOVA Academy's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this Policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students in NOVA Academy have access to healthy foods throughout the school day—both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the Charter School campus—in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards.
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors.
- Students have opportunities to be physically active during and after Charter School.
- The Charter School engages in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness.
- Charter School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school.
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of NOVA Academy in creating continuity between Charter School and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits.
- The Charter School establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of this Policy and its established goals and objectives.

This Policy applies to all students and staff in NOVA Academy. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

POLICY CONTENT

I. School Wellness Committee

The Executive Director or designee will appoint a Wellness Committee consisting of stakeholder representatives, including: parents/guardians, students, school food service professionals, school administrators, school health professionals, physical education teachers, representatives of the Board, and members of the public.

The Wellness Committee will meet at least two (2) times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of this Policy.

The purpose of the Wellness Committee is to advise the school (s) on health- related issues, activities, policies and programs. At the discretion of the Executive Director or designee, the committee's charges may include planning and implementing activities to promote health within the school or community.

Wellness Committee membership will include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program (e.g., school nutrition designee); physical education teachers; health education teachers; school health professionals, and mental health and social services staff [e.g., school counselors, psychologists, social workers, or psychiatrists]; school administrators (e.g., Executive Director, principal, vice principal), school board members; health professionals (e.g., dietitians, doctors, nurses, dentists); and the general public. When possible, membership will also include Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education coordinators ("SNAP-EDEDSNAP-Ed"). To the extent possible, the Wellness Committee will include representatives from each school campus and reflect the diversity of the community.

Leadership

The Executive Director or designee(s) will convene the Wellness Committee and facilitate development of and updates to the Policy and will ensure the Charter School's compliance with the Policy. Additionally, the designated official for oversight of the Wellness Committee is:

Kimberly Beckstrom
Principal
NOVA Academy Early College High School
500 W. Santa Ana Blvd.
Santa Ana, CA 92701
(714) 569-0948 ext. 1010

Scott Winter
Principal
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52780 Frederick St
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II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

Using the steps outlined below, NOVA Academy will ensure the Charter School meets legal obligations regarding implementation of this Policy.

This Policy and the progress reports can be found at:
https://www.nova-academy.org/santaana/policies-notices/

Recordkeeping
NOVA Academy will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of this policy in the main office. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- This written Policy.
- Documentation demonstrating that this Policy has been made available to the public.
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements and community involvement requirements;
- Documentation of the triennial assessment of this Policy.
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of this Policy has been made available to the public.

Annual Notification of Policy
NOVA Academy will actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about this Policy, including its content, any updates to the Policy, and implementation status. NOVA Academy will make this information available via the Charter School website and/or Charter School-wide communications. NOVA Academy will provide as much information as possible about the Charter School nutrition environment. This will include a summary of Charter School's events or activities related to Policy implementation.

Annually, NOVA Academy will also publicize the name and contact information of the Charter School official(s) leading and coordinating the Wellness Committee, as well as information on how the public can get involved with the Wellness Committee.

Triennial Progress Assessments
At least once every three years, the Executive Director will evaluate compliance with this Wellness Policy to assess the implementation of this Policy.

The Executive Director or designee shall establish quality indicators that will be used to measure the implementation of this Policy at each school site. These measures shall include, but not be limited to:

- An analysis of the nutritional content of federally reimbursable meals served;
- Student participation rates in school meal programs;
- Review of whether sales of competitive foods and beverages in fundraisers or other venues outside the meal programs were compliant with the requirements under this Policy;
- Feedback from food service personnel, Charter School administrators, school health councils, parents/guardians, students, and any other appropriate persons;
- The extent to which NOVA Academy's Policy compares to model wellness policies; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of this Policy.

The Executive Director or designee will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

NOVA Academy will update or modify this Policy based on the results of the annual Charter School Health Index and triennial assessments and/or as Charter School priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. This Policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three (3) years, following the triennial assessment. All stakeholders are able to participate in the development, review, update, and implementation of the NOVA Academy Student Wellness Policy. Please contact the designated official for your site (refer to page 3) for more details.

Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications

NOVA Academy is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. NOVA Academy will actively communicate ways in which representatives of Wellness Committee/the Charter School and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of this Policy through a variety of means. NOVA Academy will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in Charter School nutrition standards.

NOVA Academy will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the Charter School's website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to this Policy, as well as how to get involved and support the Policy. The Charter School will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community and accomplished through means similar to other ways that other local schools are communicating important school information with parents.

The Charter School will actively notify the public about the content of, the implementation of, or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. NOVA Academy will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

III. Nutrition

Charter School participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program ("NSLP").

The Board recognizes that students need adequate, nourishing food in order to grow, learn and maintain good health. The Board desired to provide students with adequate space and time to eat meals.

To reinforce the Charter School's nutrition education program, food available on Charter School premises shall:

1. Be carefully selected so as to contribute to student's nutritional wellbeing and the prevention of disease.
2. Meet or exceed nutritional standards established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations (NOVA Academy offers reimbursable school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards).
3. Be prepared in ways that will appeal to students, retain nutritive quality and foster lifelong healthy eating habits.
4. Be served in age-appropriate quantities.
5. Be sold at reasonable prices.
6. Be accessible to all students.
7. Be appealing and attractive to children.
8. Be served in clean and pleasant settings.
9. Promote healthy food and beverage choices using at least ten of the following Smarter Lunchroom techniques:
    a. Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chaffing dishes or hotel pans).
    b. Sliced or cut fruit is available daily.
    c. Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students.
    d. All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names.
    e. Daily vegetable options are bundled into all grab-and-go meals available to students.
    f. All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
    g. White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers.
    h. Alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas.
    i. A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to students (e.g., salad bars, snack rooms, etc.).
    j. Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor and promotional ideas.
    k. Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options.

The Board desires to provide students with adequate time and space to eat meals. To the extent possible, school and transportation schedules shall be designed to encourage participation in school meal programs.

The Executive Director or designee shall periodically review the adequacy of school facilities for cafeteria eating and food preparation.

IV. Nutrition Education and Physical Activity Goals

The Board has adopted goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that are designed to promote student wellness and reduce childhood obesity in a manner that NOVA Academy determines appropriate.

The Charter School's nutrition education and physical education programs shall be based on research, consistent with the expectations established in the state's curriculum frameworks, and designed to build the skills and knowledge that all students need to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Nutrition education shall be provided as part of the health education program in grades 9-12- and, as appropriate, shall be integrated into core academic subjects.

All 9-12 students shall be provided opportunities to be physically active on a regular basis. Opportunities for moderate to vigorous physical activity shall be provided through physical education, breaks, Charter School athletic programs, and extracurricular programs.

The Executive Director or designee shall encourage staff to serve as positive role models. The Charter School shall promote and may provide opportunities for regular physical activity among employees.

Professional development shall include instructional strategies related to student health knowledge and skills, physical education, and be designed to promote healthy behaviors. Furthermore, the Board strongly encourages the use of physical activity as a reward for students when appropriate.

To encourage consistent health messages between the home and school environment, the Executive Director or designee may disseminate health information to parents/guardians through school newsletters, handouts, parent/guardian meetings, the school website, and other communications. Outreach to parents/guardians shall emphasize the relationship between student health and academic performance.

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

NOVA Academy discourages the marketing and advertising of non-nutritious foods and beverages through signage, vending machines, logos, school supplies, advertisements in school publications, or other means. Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to

students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards such that only those foods that comply with or exceed those nutrition standards are permitted to be marketed or promoted to students.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day. NOVA Academy will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

The Charter School is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the Charter School campus during the school day support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold to students on campus during the school day (including the period from the midnight before, to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day) and served outside of the Charter School meal programs (e.g., "competitive" foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits.

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable School meal programs that are sold to students on the School campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, à la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores and snack or food carts.

As the Executive Director reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by this Policy.

As long as a student has been provided the maximum of one nutritionally adequate free breakfast meal and one nutritionally adequate free lunch meal, regardless of the student's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals, the Charter School may sell to the student, the entrée from an **additional** nutritiously adequate meal that qualifies for federal reimbursement, from the same meal service.

Celebrations and Rewards

Except in limited situations as noted below, all foods offered[1] on the NOVA Academy campus and at school-sponsored activities will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Charter School nutrition standards for celebrations and parties. NOVA Academy will

[1] For purposes of this paragraph, "offered" does not include sold or otherwise provided as a part of the federally reimbursable meal program.

provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas.

1. Classroom snacks brought by parents: NOVA Academy will provide to parents a list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards.
2. Rewards and incentives: Charter School will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a list of alternative ways to reward children. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

On special occasions (including classroom celebrations, holidays, rewards and/or incentives), foods that do not meet the requirements of USDA Smart Snacks can be offered to students during the school day with the prior written permission of the Executive Director or designee.

Fundraising

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Charter Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the NOVA Academy campus during the school day. NOVA Academy will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas.

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.

NOVA Academy will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the Charter School campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through at least:

- Implementing evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs
- Promoting foods and beverages that meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards
- Nutrition awareness postings and healthy menu planning
- Parent education workshops
- Nutrition professionals presenting nutrition information and healthy cooking techniques on Career Day

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All NOVA Academy nutrition staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA professional standards for child nutrition

professionals. These Charter School nutrition personnel will refer to USDA's Professional Standards for Charter School Nutrition Standards website to search for training that meets their learning needs. Professional development for food service personnel shall include nutritional education and safe food handling.

When feasible, NOVA Academy will offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school (e.g., increasing the use of kinesthetic teaching approaches or incorporating nutrition lessons into math class). Professional learning will help NOVA Academy staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing district reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

Nutrition Guidelines for Foods Available During the School Day

The Board believes that foods and beverages available to students at the Charter School should support the health curriculum and promote optimal health. Nutrition standards adopted by the Charter School for all foods and beverages sold to students, including foods and beverages provided through the food service program will comply with all applicable state and federal laws with the goal of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.

Guidelines for Reimbursable Meals

Foods and beverages provided through federally reimbursable school meal programs shall meet or exceed federal regulations and guidance issued pursuant to the National School Lunch Program ("NSLP"), and the School Breakfast Program ("SBP").

In order to maximize NOVA Academy's ability to provide nutritious meals and snacks, each school shall participate in available federal school nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, as well as snack and summer programs to the extent possible.

Physical Activity

The Centers for Disease Control ("CDC") recommends that all children and adolescents participate in a minimum of sixty (60) minutes of physical activity every day. The CDC recommends that aerobic activity make up the bulk of such physical activity, with vigorous-intensity aerobic activity on at least three days per week. The CDC also recommends that physical activity include muscle strengthening activities, such as gymnastics or push-ups, on at least three days per week, and bone strengthening activities like jumping rope or running at least three days per week. The Charter School has the following specific goals to promote student wellness, consistent with this Policy:

- Provide physical activity that is based upon state/federal guidelines.
- Utilize a wellness approach to physical education that includes healthy lifestyle choices to reduce undue fatigue or stress.
- Reinforce the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically healthy lifestyle and reduce time spent on sedentary activities.

In developing these goals, the Charter School reviewed and considered evidence-based strategies and techniques and parent input. Charter School will work toward achievement of these goals by:

- Lesson plans developed by a certified physical education teacher, based on federal/state guidelines, and differentiated as applicable.
- Providing objectives, explanation, demonstration, and opportunities for students to practice the knowledge or skills acquired.
- Feedback and input from all stakeholders in physical education including students, parents, teacher(s), and school administration.

Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

NOVA Academy will integrate wellness activities across the entire Charter School setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues and physical activity facilities. NOVA Academy will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development and strong educational outcomes.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of this Policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the Wellness Committee and/or parents and the community.

Community Partnerships

Charter School will develop and enhance relationships with community partners in support of this Policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with this Policy and its goals.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the State or local Agency that administers the program or contact USDA

through the Telecommunications Relay Service at 711 (voice and TTY). Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: How to File a Complaint, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
   Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
   1400 Independence Avenue, SW
   Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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