

# Redwood Coast Montessori Wellness Policy

## Preamble

Redwood Coast Montessori (hereto referred to as the RCM) is committed to the optimal development of every student. RCM 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.

This policy outlines RCM'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 attending RCM have access to healthy foods throughout the school day – both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the 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 before, during and after school;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- 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 RCM in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- RCM establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all students, staff and schools in the RCM. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

## **I. School Wellness Committee**

### *Committee Role and Membership*

The Director or designee may appoint a student health council or wellness committee consisting of parents/guardians, students, school employees, RCM board representatives, health professionals, school nurses, health educators, physical education educators, members of the public, and/or others interested in school health issues.

The school health council or committee will advise the school on health-related issues, activities, policies, and programs. At the discretion of the Director, the council's charges may include the planning and implementation of activities to promote health within the school or community. The committee will review the school wellness policy annually and report to the Board of Directors.

### *Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications*

RCM is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. RCM will actively communicate ways in which members of the school community can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for RCM. RCM 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 School nutrition standards. RCM will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the RCM'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 the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy.

## **II. Nutrition**

### ***School Meals***

RCM is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams *trans* fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

RCM is committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students;
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (The RCM offers reimbursable school meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](#).)

### ***Staff Qualifications and Professional Development***

All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the [USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals](#). These school nutrition personnel will refer to [USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website](#) to search for training that meets their learning needs.

### ***Water***

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

Students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

### ***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. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff, teachers, parents, students and the community.

RCM will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs.

### **III. Physical Activity**

Children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive school physical activity program (CSPAP). A CSPAP reflects strong coordination and synergy across all of the components: quality physical education as the foundation; physical activity before, during and after school; staff involvement and family and community engagement and RCM is committed to providing these opportunities. Schools will ensure that these varied physical activity opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education (addressed in "Physical Education" subsection).

To the extent practicable, RCM will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. RCM will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

#### ***Physical Education***

RCM will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts. The curriculum will support the essential components of physical education.

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. RCM will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

All RCM students in each grade will receive physical education for at least 60-89 minutes per week throughout the school year.

#### ***Recess***

RCM will offer at least 20 minutes of recess on all days during the school year. If recess is offered before lunch, RCM will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing time, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves, will be built in to the recess transition period/timeframe before students enter the cafeteria.

Outdoor recess will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play.

In the event that RCM must conduct indoor recess, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable.

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active, and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

#### ***Active Academics***

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into "core" subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

RCM will support classroom teachers incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects by providing annual professional development opportunities and

resources, including information on leading activities, activity options, as well as making available background material on the connections between learning and movement.

Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

### **Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness**

RCM offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity either before and/or after the school day (or both) through a variety of methods.

RCM will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues and physical activity facilities. RCM 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 the wellness policy.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy guidelines. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

### ***Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement***

RCM will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

RCM will use electronic mechanisms (e.g., email or displaying notices on the RCM's website), as well as non-electronic mechanisms, (e.g., newsletters, presentations to parents or sending information home to parents), to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

RCM promotes staff member participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management that are accessible and free or low-cost.

### ***Professional Learning***

When feasible, RCM 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 RCM staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing RCM reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.