

Ireton Christian School Wellness Policy

The Ireton Christian School Board of Education is dedicated to fostering a school environment that supports and enhances children's health, well-being, and learning potential through nutritious eating and physical activity. The well-being of students—physically, socially, and emotionally—should be a central focus of school programs related to nutrition, education, and physical activity. Recognizing the proven link between proper nutrition, adequate physical activity, and academic achievement, the Board of Education establishes the following objectives and directives to ensure that Ireton Christian School cultivates a culture of student wellness.

I. Food and Beverages

Students' dietary habits are shaped by the availability of food and beverage options. The Board acknowledges the importance of a well-balanced, nutritious, and appropriately portioned diet in fostering student wellness. To equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary for making lifelong healthy food choices, Ireton Christian School will ensure that all food and beverage options available in school promote good nutrition, variety, and reasonable portions. The school shall meet or exceed the federal requirements and nutrition standards for reimbursable school meals.

The school will comply with all applicable federal, state, and local nutrition regulations. To achieve this, the Board mandates that the school:

1. Provide nutritious and appealing meals and beverages, following state and federal nutrition guidelines, and adhere to safe food preparation practices.
2. Maintain a clean, safe, and pleasant dining environment for students.
3. Ensure sufficient space and serving areas to minimize wait times and maximize student access to school meals.
4. Encourage student participation in school meal programs while protecting the confidentiality of students receiving free or reduced-price meals.
5. Implement educational experiences that support the voluntary adoption of healthy eating habits and nutrition-related behaviors.

A. School Meals and Vending Machines (currently do not have any)

The Board requires that the school:

1. Offer a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat options.

2. Encourage students to sample unfamiliar but nutritious foods.
3. Actively inform families about the availability of free or reduced-price meal programs and encourage eligible families to apply.
4. Explore options to source food from local farms and suppliers.
5. Provide students with adequate time to consume their meals.
6. Ensure drinking water is available where meals are served.
7. Prioritize fresh, natural, and minimally processed foods while discouraging the consumption of items high in sugar, fat, and artificial ingredients.

B. Food in the Classroom

1. Teachers, staff, and coaches should refrain from using food as a reward or incentive for academic or behavioral achievements, unless specified in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan.
2. Identified students at the elementary level should only consume food provided by their parents/guardians.
3. Teachers and staff should minimize the use of food for instructional purposes, except when directly related to curriculum, enrichment, or cultural studies.
4. If food is used in lessons, teachers must:
 - Consult with the administrator.
 - Inform parents of the ingredients and, if appropriate, share them with students.
 - Notify parents/guardians in advance.
5. Parents/guardians should be encouraged to provide nutritious snacks for their children.
6. Food brought from home by a student should be for personal consumption only.

C. Celebrations

Classroom celebrations, excluding birthdays, should be limited to six per year. Parents, teachers, and staff are encouraged to opt for nutritious foods or non-food items for celebrations.

D. On the School Bus

Eating should not take place on school buses unless required by a student's IEP, IHP, or Section 504 Plan.

E. Fundraising Activities

Fundraising organizers are encouraged to offer healthy alternatives that promote wellness. Non-food incentives such as additional recess or special privileges should be prioritized.

F. Alcoholic Beverages Prohibited

The sale, distribution, or consumption of alcoholic beverages is strictly forbidden at school-related events where students are present, regardless of location.

II. Physical Activity

Regular physical activity is crucial for overall health and academic success. The Board supports every student in acquiring the skills and knowledge necessary to engage in routine physical activity and recognize its lifelong benefits.

A. Physical Education

1. Ensure students participate in physical education for the required minimum hours or days per state regulations.
2. Provide physical education classes that align with appropriate standards and promote lifelong physical activity.
3. Prohibit the use of physical activity as a form of punishment or reward.

B. Recess

1. Ensure daily recess for elementary school students.

C. Extracurricular Physical Activity Opportunities

1. Encourage participation in extracurricular physical activities, including intramurals, interscholastic athletics, and activity clubs.
 2. Offer programs that cater to the diverse physical activity interests and abilities of all students.
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III. Nutrition Education and Promotion

The Board believes in integrating nutrition education into the school experience to reinforce healthy habits. The school shall:

1. Incorporate nutrition education into the PK-12 curriculum, integrating it across relevant subjects.
 2. Engage parents, students, and the community in nutrition-related activities.
 3. Promote healthy food choices, including fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
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IV. Additional School-Based Wellness Initiatives (Goal)

Goal: Implement a School-Wide “Wellness Wednesday” Initiative

Establish a weekly “Wellness Wednesday” program that includes rotating activities focused on physical health and mental wellness. Activities may include:

- Outdoor movement breaks or nature walks
- Staff and student wellness challenges
- Short educational segments on healthy eating, hydration, sleep, screen time, or stress management
- A “Wellness Wednesday Spotlight” during school-wide announcements—featuring a wellness tip, Bible verse related to health or peace, or a positive challenge for the day (e.g., “compliment three people,” “drink an extra glass of water,” “spend 5 minutes outside”)

This initiative would be flexible and scalable by age group, involving staff and students alike, and reinforcing wellness as an integral part of the school culture.

V. Implementation

The Principal or their designee will oversee the implementation of this wellness policy and ensure compliance with its provisions.

VI. Monitoring and Review

The school will communicate updates regarding this policy to the public. A School Wellness Committee, consisting of staff, the school nurse, the Food Director, and representatives for teachers, students, and parents, will:

1. Oversee the development, implementation, and periodic evaluation of this policy.
2. Gather feedback from key stakeholders on wellness activities and their impact.
3. Present an annual report to the Board on the policy's effectiveness and implementation.