

### **LUNCH PROGRAM:**

**Sacred Heart STEM School will be participating in the National School Lunch/Breakfast program, designated as a CEP school.** As part of this program, **Sacred Heart STEM School** will offer healthy meals every school day at NO COST due to the Nationwide Waiver to Allow the Seamless Summer Option through School Year 2021-2022. Students will be able to participate in these programs without having to pay a fee or submit a household application. Sacred Heart School's lunch program will comply fully with the standards of the USDA.

**YOU STILL NEED TO SUBMIT A COMPLETED LUNCH MENU ON TIME.**

**GLASS BOTTLES ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE CAFÉ OR CLASSROOM.**

### **WELLNESS POLICY**

The USDA Child Nutrition Programs aim to improve the health of students, help mitigate hunger and obesity and model healthy eating by providing meals that are low in fat and sodium, and abundant in fruits, vegetables and whole grains. These programs support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, Sacred Heart School will participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) and will provide meals that meet the nutrition standards for school meals by including:

- fruits and vegetables, including a variety of fruits and vegetables that meet the required vegetable subgroups (dark green, red and orange, dry beans, and peas and legumes)
- grains (whole grain-rich)
- meats and meat alternates
- fat-free and low-fat milk
- access to free drinking water

In addition:

- school meals will be accessible to all students, and the district will accommodate special dietary needs and food allergies as required by federal regulations
- school meals will be administered by a team of qualified nutrition professionals who meet or exceed the hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements of the USDA Professional Standards for Child Nutrition Professionals
- the district will make every effort to ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that the method of payment does not identify a student as eligible for free or reduced-price meals (e.g., using prepayment systems which mask students' eligibility status)

The school requires that:

**Water will be available throughout the day to students, faculty, and staff.**

- free, safe and unflavored drinking water is available to students during the school day and during the extended school day\* (including during out-of-school time/and before and after school),
- water cups/jugs are available in the cafeteria if a drinking fountain is not present
- students can bring and carry approved water bottles filled with only water before, during and after the school day across the school campus
- all water sources and containers (e.g., drinking fountains, water jugs, hydration stations and water jets) will be maintained regularly to ensure adherence to health and safety standards

#### **SMART SNACKS:**

The school requires that all foods and beverages sold outside of the school meal programs during the school day and during the extended school day (including during out-of-school time/and before and after school) will, at a minimum, meet Smart Snacks standards.

The school requires that all foods and beverages served and offered on the school campus outside of the school meal programs during the school day and during the extended school day (including during out-of-school time/and before and after school) will, at a minimum, meet Smart Snacks.

School lunches are ordered from Essence of Thyme and follow the National School Lunch program requirements. The program is Allergy Aware. Menu order forms will be sent home monthly. The school provides balanced meals with low-fat milk. **Soft drinks, candy, and other non-nutritional foods are NOT sold in the cafeteria.** For safety reasons, students are NOT allowed to use a microwave at lunch. In the interest of fairness to all students and to encourage healthy eating habits, fast food and /or take-out food are NOT allowed. **NO OUTSIDE FOODS WILL BE SOLD, and branding and marketing of these foods is prohibited.**

#### **CELEBRATIONS:**

Celebrations and positive reinforcement are an important part of our school's culture of supporting students.

Using food as a reward or withholding food as a punishment undermines healthy eating habits and interferes with children's ability to self-regulate their eating.

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, the school will ensure that celebrations and rewards are consistent with our nutrition policies and comply with Smart Snack guidelines.

## Physical Education:

In order to be compliant with the USDA final rule, the school requires that a combination of physical activity opportunities from, but not limited to, the list below be offered to students:

- physical education (
- classroom physical activity
- active academics
- daily recess
- before- and after-school activities, including sports

Classroom physical activity is defined as any physical activity done in the classroom. Classroom physical activity can take place at any time and occur in one or several brief periods of time during the school day.

Classroom physical activity should be offered in addition to physical education and recess and at all school levels.

The primary approaches for classroom physical activity are:

- physical activity integrated into planned academic instruction
- physical activity outside of planned academic instruction

Classroom physical activity can benefit students by:

- improving their concentration and ability to stay on-task in the classroom
- reducing disruptive behavior, such as fidgeting, in the classroom
- improving their motivation and engagement in the learning process
- helping to improve their academic performance (higher grades and test scores)
- increasing their amount of daily physical activity

The school requires that:

- classroom physical activity be incorporated into planning throughout the school day and the extended school day
- classroom physical activity be integrated into planned academic instruction to reinforce academic concepts and to reinforce skills learned in physical education
- physical activity be provided in the classroom outside of planned instruction (physical activity breaks)
- classroom physical activity be offered in addition to physical education and recess at all school levels
- barriers to classroom physical activity, such as lack of equipment or available space, are minimized
- schools do not utilize activities or materials that are the product of a food, beverage or dietary supplement company
- classroom physical activity **is not withheld** from or required of students as a disciplinary approach

- classroom teachers receive resources and annual training on promoting physical activity and integrating physical activity in the classroom

Recess is a scheduled time that provides an essential break from demanding cognitive tasks. Recess provides time to move, play, problem solve and socialize. Increased attention span and academic performance can result after recess, and recess helps children to learn social skills that may not be achieved in a structured classroom environment. Recess is offered in kindergarten through 8th grade.

These physical activity periods to provide student-selected opportunities to engage in physical activity and take a break from academic work during the school day.

The school will ensure that all elementary schools will offer 20 or more minutes of recess on all days during the school year which will complement, not substitute for, physical education class and will:

- provide schools and students with adequate spaces, facilities, equipment and supplies for recess
- ensure that spaces and facilities for recess meet or exceed recommended safety standards
- prohibit the exclusion of students from recess for disciplinary reasons or academic performance in the classroom
- provide staff members who lead or supervise recess with ongoing professional development
- provide strategic inclusion and oversight of opportunities for students with special needs or disabilities to participate
- assess the accessibility of playgrounds and outdoor play areas and make changes to improve access

A healthy school nutrition environment provides students with consistent, reliable health information. Good nutrition is essential for optimal learning. The classroom and lunch program provide clear and consistent messages that explain and reinforce healthy eating and physical activity habits.

- Availability to participate in after-school physical activities.
- Health/nutrition classes by the school nurse.
- Gym once a week
- Daily exercise and activity
- Daily walking
- School wide field days

### **WELLNESS GOALS:**

Wellness is a state of being healthy in body, mind, and spirit. It is the result of making choices that lead to a more balanced and fulfilling life. When we are well, we have

more energy, feel better emotionally, and are able to enjoy our lives more fully. By making small changes, we have a great opportunity to build lasting wellness through healthy habits and ultimately achieve our health goals.

**Drink more water.** Ideas: Use larger (re-fillable) water bottles; implement 30-second “water breaks/reminders” during your classes; keep a post it notes at your desk to track water consumption throughout the school day. Faculty and staff will model healthy water consumption throughout the day. Water is available to all students throughout the day.

**Take more steps.** Ideas: Don’t use escalators or elevators for a month; take a short class break to walk in place or take a quick lap of the classroom; set up a schedule to walk your pet (or your neighbor’s pet!). Recess games and physical activity.

**Try a new form of exercise.** Ideas: Dance to five of your favorite songs every day; join a sports team; try a new sport or game at recess.

**Practice mindfulness.** Ideas: Sit quietly for 5 minutes every day; listen to a calming instrumental song every morning while you get ready for school; get the entire class to spend two (quiet) minutes focusing on their breath after coming back from recess.

**Create healthy sleep habits.** Ideas: Read a few pages of a book before bed; don’t look at screens for 30 minutes before going to sleep; spend a few minutes stretching before bed.

**Healthy School Celebrations.** Birthdays are celebrated with a dress down day, birthday crown and a birthday pencil. No food may be brought into school for parties **NO OUTSIDE FOODS WILL BE SOLD**, and branding and marketing of these foods is prohibited.

**Healthy Snacks.** Parents are notified that no chips, candy maybe sent in for snacks. Acceptable snack choices include fruit, vegetables, yogurt etc. Weekly nutrition classes for all grades.

The Wellness Committee’s meeting times, minutes of the meetings will be made available to the public.

**The Wellness Committee reviews its policy every three years. Policy established 2023. The next scheduled assessment of the policy will be in September of 2025. Results of that assessment will be made public by the website and notifications sent home.**

#### **Non-Discrimination 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, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of

hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

### **Meal Modifications in Child Nutrition Program**

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) nondiscrimination regulation (7 CFR 15b), as well as the regulations governing the Child Nutrition Programs, make it clear that substitutions to the regular meal must be made, at no extra cost, for children who are unable to eat meals served in any Child Nutrition Program (CNP) because of their disabilities.

### **Definition of a Disability:**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Amendments Act of 2008 made important changes to the meaning and interpretation of the term "disability." The changes demonstrated Congress's intent to restore the broad scope of the ADA by making it easier for an individual to establish that he or she has a disability. After passage of the ADA Amendments Act, most physical and mental impairments constitute a disability.

**Please contact Iveka Soto at [isoto@sacredheart-boston.org](mailto:isoto@sacredheart-boston.org) or 617-323-2500 if you need a Meal Modification request form.**

### **Meal Price Policy**

#### Notification to Parents/Legal Guardians

To maximize federal nutrition benefits and minimize further debt to the household, during this 30-day period, school districts should affirmatively contact households and offer an application for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

When notifying households of unpaid meal debt, Sacred Heart School will contact the

responsible parent or legal guardian of a student with unpaid meal debt. Recommended ways to ensure households have received and read the notification are either the use of first-class mail or through email communication that includes a receipt response.

Districts are urged to make every effort to reach and discuss unpaid meal charges with the responsible adult.

#### Determination of a Student's Free and Reduced-Price Meal Eligibility

During the 30-day period after notifying the parent or legal guardian of unpaid meal debt, DESE is requiring all school districts to access all methods of benefit determinations including:

- direct certification matching through the Virtual Gateway,
- determining if the student is otherwise categorically eligible through either the homeless, migrant or runaway categories,
- in foster care through the state, or
- determined through an NSLP household application.

As noted in the companion memorandum "New Requirements Related to Special Provisions," school districts are strongly encouraged to conduct monthly direct certification file uploads to timely capture students who are automatically eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Given the more than 30% increase in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participation in the Commonwealth since the onset of the pandemic<sup>1</sup> and the expiration of the federal pandemic unemployment assistance in September of 2021, more Massachusetts students and their siblings are in receipt of SNAP benefits and thus are also eligible for free school meals.

#### Required Serving of a Reimbursable Meal

Students should not be denied access to school meals during the 30-day period unless the district has decided that the household is ineligible for free or reduced-price meals. Ineligibility for free and reduced-price meals takes place when an application is determined over income. The meal provided during that timeframe must meet the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) meal pattern whether it is the main meal being offered or an alternate meal.

#### Protection of Students with Unpaid Meal Debt from Public Identification and Punishment

M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 72B also protects students with unpaid meal debt from public identification, embarrassment or any disciplinary action due solely to unpaid meal debt.

M.G.L., Section 71, Section 72B (b) states the following:

No agent, employee or volunteer of a school or school district shall:

- take any action that would publicly identify a student when payment has not been received for a school meal or for meals previously served to the student.
- serve a student with unpaid meal debt an alternate meal that is not also available to all students at the cafeteria.
- deny a student a meal as a form of behavioral discipline or punishment.

- dispose of an already served meal because of the student's lack of funds to pay for the meal or because of unresolved meal debt.
- prohibit a student or a sibling of a student from attending or participating in non-fee based extracurricular activities, field trips or school events solely because of the student's unresolved meal debt.
- prohibit a student from receiving grades, official transcripts, report cards or from graduating or attending graduation events solely because of unresolved meal debt; or
- require a parent or guardian to pay fees or costs in excess of the actual amounts owed for meals previously served to the student.