

The Children's Guild

Local Wellness Policy

SY 2024-2027

The Children's Guild is committed to the well-being of all students, staff, and families it serves. As a vital part of its mission to support the whole child, The Children's Guild has established this Local Wellness Policy (LWP) for the school years 2024–2027 to promote and protect students' health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.

This policy outlines a comprehensive approach to wellness that addresses nutrition, physical education, mental health, community involvement, environmental sustainability, and ongoing accountability. It is designed to meet or exceed the requirements of the USDA, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).

Committee Role and Membership

The Children's Guild will establish a Local Wellness Committee that meets at least twice per year. The committee will oversee the development, implementation, and evaluation of the LWP. Membership will include parents, caregivers, students, nutrition staff, physical and health education teachers, administrators, mental health professionals, and community stakeholders.

Leadership

Each school will designate a Wellness Policy Coordinator responsible for compliance and coordination. The designated official for oversight is Shaneia Crum (Crums@childrensguild.org), who will ensure compliance with USDA, MSDE, and NSLP guidelines.

Name	Title / Relationship to the School or District	Email address	Role on Committee
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Desiree Davis	Principal	DavisD@Childrensguild.org	Wellness policy Compliance
Deidre Frayer	Office Manager	Frayerd@Childrensguild.org	Administrative Compliance
Admire Tondoneh	Nurse	Tondoneha@Childrensguild.org	Medical Consultant
Nichelle Griffin	Site Food Manager	GriffinN@Childrensguild.org	Food service Compliance
Gauden Cabatas	Physical Education Teacher	CabatasG@Childrensguild.org	Physical Play and movement

Policy Implementation and Monitoring

This policy is aligned with MSDE’s Memo 23-17: Questions and Answers on the Local School Wellness Policy Final Rule and will be reviewed against this guidance during triennial assessments and updates. Staff and stakeholders will receive annual training, including resources such as the Maryland Smart Snacks Video developed by MSDE, to support compliance with Smart Snack standards.

Each school under The Children’s Guild will maintain an implementation plan. WELL-SAT 3.0 will be used to assess compliance and effectiveness. Documentation, including this policy, assessments, and public notices, will be retained at the central office and made publicly available.

Public Notification and Website Access

The Children’s Guild will post the Local Wellness Policy and the most recent Triennial Assessment at <https://childrensguildschools.org/pgc/health-wellness/>. Annual notifications will be shared via newsletters, family communications, and public postings.

Triennial Assessments

The Children's Guild completed its last assessment in 2020–2021. The next assessment will use WELL-SAT 3.0 and be conducted before the end of SY 2025–2026. All results will be made available online for public transparency.

Nutrition Standards

Meals served through the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program will meet federal nutrition standards. Menus will be appealing, culturally appropriate, and accommodate special dietary needs. Breakfast will be offered, and students will be given at least 30 minutes to eat lunch. In alignment with our existing goals, The Children's Guild continues to aim to improve the diet and health of students and help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating habits to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs through the school meal program. Additionally, building on current efforts, The Children's Guild will continue to promote healthy food and beverage choices using evidence-based "Smarter Lunchroom" techniques.

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.

Water Access

Free, potable drinking water will be accessible throughout the school day, including during meal service. Water systems will be maintained regularly.

Competitive Foods and Fundraising

All foods and beverages sold during the school day must meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards and the Maryland Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School (rev. 4.12.22). All competitive foods and beverages must meet Smart Snacks standards. Food will not be used as a reward, and fundraising during school hours must follow nutritional guidelines. Consistent with current practices, in alignment with our wellness goals, The Children's Guild does not use food or beverages as rewards, incentives, or prizes for academic performance or good behavior. To support wellness initiatives, The Children's Guild will maintain and distribute a list of healthy fundraising ideas, including walk-a-thons, Jump Rope for Heart, and dance-a-thons. The Children's Guild does not permit third-party vendors to sell food or beverages on campus during the school day. This policy helps maintain compliance with USDA Smart Snacks standards and

ensures that all food offerings align with our wellness goals.

Clarification on Provided Foods

While The Children's Guild does not sell food outside meal programs, any food or beverages provided (e.g., for classroom events) must meet Smart Snacks guidelines. Healthy celebration guidelines will be shared annually.

Marketing and Promotion

The Children's Guild will follow USDA's Smart Snacks in School standards, as outlined in the federal guidance document A Guide to Smart Snacks in School, to ensure that any marketed items meet nutritional quality benchmarks.

Marketing of food and beverages to students during the school day must meet USDA Smart Snacks standards. The Children's Guild will promote healthy choices using Smarter Lunchroom techniques and evidence-based practices.

Nutrition and Health Education

Comprehensive nutrition education will be integrated across subjects and include hands-on activities like school gardens and cooking lessons. Health education will cover physical activity, nutrition, mental health, substance use prevention and will meet Maryland Health Education Standards. As already implemented, nutrition education remains directly linked to school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, and other nutrition-related community services.

Environmental Sustainability

The Children's Guild will engage in sustainable practices such as sourcing local foods, reducing waste, and implementing recycling programs. As part of our established sustainability efforts, The Children's Guild maintains a school-wide recycling program and contracts with food service vendors that utilize locally grown, locally processed, and unprocessed foods from growers engaged in sustainable agriculture practices.

Physical Education and Activity

Grades K–5 will receive 150 minutes/week, and grades 6–8 will receive 225 minutes/week of physical education. Activities will be inclusive, engaging, and support lifelong fitness. Physical activity will not be used as punishment or withheld for behavioral reasons. Aligned with our behavior support philosophy, physical activity will not be used as a form of punishment. Students will be encouraged to view movement as a positive and enjoyable part of their daily routine.

Recordkeeping and Annual Review

All records related to the wellness policy will be maintained including assessments, updates, and stakeholder communications. The Local Wellness Committee will review the policy annually and revise it based on feedback, policy updates, and emerging health science.