

St. Joseph Catholic School, York, NE

School Wellness Policy – March 2026

St. Joseph Catholic School desires to promote healthy students and healthy living by supporting good nutrition, nutrition education, and regular physical activity. St. Joseph Catholic School strives to promote student health and reduce childhood obesity. The principal will be responsible for ensuring the implementation and compliance of the School Wellness Policy (SWP) as outlined:

Preamble

St. Joseph Catholic School is committed to optimal development of every student. The school believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve spiritual, 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.

This policy outlines the school's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to participate in 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 have access to healthy foods throughout the school day—through reimbursable meals and other foods available at school in accordance with Federal and State nutrition standards;
- Students have access to water throughout the school day;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating and behaviors;
- Students have opportunity to be physically active before, during, and after school;
- The schools engages in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that encourage student wellness;
- The community is engaged in supporting the school in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong health habits; and
- The school establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

School Wellness Committee (SWC)

In order to maximize the implementation of the goals and procedures outlined in our SWP, all teaching staff members of St. Joseph School will be on the SWC. This includes classroom, physical education and music teachers and the building principal. The membership of our committee will also include, but not limited to, the pastor, food service director, and school advisory members.

St. Joseph Catholic School, York, NE

School Wellness Policy – March 2026

The principal will convene the SWC and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy. The principal will also serve as the SWP coordinator and be responsible for the following record keeping:

Record Keeping

1. The principal will retain records to document compliance with the requirements outlined in this policy on an annual basis to include but not limited to:
 - Documentation that the policy is made available to the parents and the public on our school's website.
 - Documentation of the review of the SWP by the staff at Back to School Staff meetings for implementation compliance purposes.
 - Documentation that the SWC met at least twice each school year to review the implementation and compliance of the policy.
 - Documentation that the policy is updated every three years to determine: extent school was compliant with the policy; extent our policy compares to model wellness and policies; progress made in attaining goals of the policy
 - Documentation that parents and community members were involved in the development and implementation of the SWP.
 - Annual identification of SWC members.

Nutrition Education

Our primary goal is to implement instruction that meets or exceeds the health and nutrition education objectives established by the Nebraska Department of Education. Our SWC establishes the following additional goals:

1. Curriculum: Nutrition Education will be integrated into other subjects to complement, but not replace, the health and nutrition guidelines that are provided in accordance with NDE Rule 14. Educators are to incorporate the promotion of healthy eating nutrition lifestyles in all content areas as appropriate.
2. Display Nutrition Education Materials: The cafeteria shall display posters or other communications that promote healthy nutrition choices (e.g. My Plate).
3. Nutrition Health Events: Educators are encouraged to search for and take advantage of events that promote nutrition education. Activities may include:
 - a. Health Fairs
 - b. Traveling Exhibits
 - c. Field Trips to farm or food production facilities.
 - d. Greenhouse or Tower Gardens

St. Joseph Catholic School, York, NE

School Wellness Policy – March 2026

- e. Speakers
 - f. Tasting events
4. Family: We recognize that families are a vital part of the success of the implementation of the SWP.
 - a. Parents are welcome to join their children at breakfast or lunch.
 - b. Health Wellness information will be periodically provided to parents from the principal or classroom teachers. Information shared may include: healthy snacks, options other than food for celebrations and/or healthier food options, benefits of Grab & Go Breakfast, Recess Before Lunch, etc.
 5. Staff: All employees are encouraged to be healthy role models for students. Staff is discouraged from eating or drinking beverages of minimal nutritional value during the school day in the presence of students.

Physical Activity

The established goal is to implement a curriculum that meets or exceeds the health and physical education established by the Nebraska Department of Education. Our SWC establishes the following additional goals:

1. Health will be integrated into other subjects to complement, but not replace, the health curriculum provided in accordance with NDE Rule 14.
2. Physical education class is to provide opportunities for every student to develop the knowledge and skills for specific physical activities, maintain physical fitness and the regular participation in physical activities. The curriculum adopted (SPARK) is research-based emphasizing the goals as described here.
3. Physical activity during the school day: Students will have the opportunity for daily recess. Before school, students will have time for outdoor play or walking in the gym. All students will have outdoor recess, weather permitting, or recess in the gym prior to their lunch period. **Students in grades K – 4 will have at least one additional recess period on days they are not scheduled for physical education class. Physical activity within the class period is encouraged.**
4. Noon recess will precede lunch in order to promote students' focus on eating during their lunch period.
5. The implementation of an outdoor classroom was initiated in 2022. The development of this space will promote outdoor activities and exploration for all students with a targeted completion date of 2025.
6. Punishment: Physical activity will not be used as punishment and will not be withheld as punishment. This guideline does not apply to extra-curricular activities. In no event will physical activity be used as a form of corporal punishment.

St. Joseph Catholic School, York, NE

School Wellness Policy – March 2026

7. Physical Activity Health Events: Educators are encouraged to search for and take advantage of events that promote physical activity education. Activities may include:
 - a. All School Field Day
 - b. Traveling Exhibits
 - c. Field Trips to physical activity centers or events
 - d. Physical activity speakers
8. School Communication: Information to parents will periodically include information promoting physical activity or participation. Such communication may include information about the benefits of physical activity and distribution of information about local youth sports or dance programs or family fitness opportunities.
9. Staff: All are encouraged to be healthy role models for their students. Whenever possible, staff members are encouraged to participate in physical activity with their students. Such activities may include classroom videos, all-school walking events, student-staff competitive games, etc. Staff will be offered CPR and First-Aid classes every two years. Annually, staff will receive training on seizures and anaphylaxis reaction and prevention.

Other school activities to promote student wellness

The established goal is to offer suitable opportunities to engage in health-promoting activities. Our SWC establishes the following additional goals and actions to achieve this goal:

1. Extracurricular Programs: St. Joseph Parish School will offer extracurricular athletic programs for middle school students. Programs offered by our parish school will depend on interest of students. Students in grades 7 & 8 may participate in extracurricular athletic programs offered by York Middle School.
2. Programs are in place to address smoking, vaping, and drugs during the D.A.R.E. program offered to grades 5th and 6th by our local sheriff's office. The school is a smoke-free facility.
3. Annually, a human maturation class will be offered to 5th grade students. Two classes will be held, one for boys and one for girls. Prior to the class, parents will be provided with materials that will be used. Parents may elect to have their student excluded from the class by contacting the principal.
4. Advertising: The principal will monitor advertising that occurs in the school and endeavor to limit messages that promote foods or beverages with minimal nutritional value.
5. Professional Growth:
 - a. St. Joseph's teaching staff will be provided with professional development on practices and procedures to implement the school wellness goals and recommendations. Professional development activities may include activities

St. Joseph Catholic School, York, NE

School Wellness Policy – March 2026

related to the integration of physical activities and nutrition education into the academic curriculum, information on how wellness impacts learning, and other wellness goals and activities.

- b. St. Joseph School will provide ongoing training and development for food service staff related to nutrition and wellness goals and activities.
6. Community Resources: The principal will endeavor to coordinate the school wellness program efforts with those available from medical, public health, and other community organizations. St. Joseph School will actively develop and support the engagement of students, families, and staff in community health enhancing activities and events at the school and throughout the community.
 7. Nutrition Guidelines: The established nutrition guidelines for foods available at St. Joseph School during the school day are as follows:
 - a. Grab and Go Breakfast and Lunch Programs will be offered that meet or exceed the requirements of federal and state law and regulatory authorities.
 - b. No foods in competition with the school breakfast or lunch program shall be sold or otherwise made available to students anywhere on the school premises during the period of one-half hour prior to serving breakfast or lunch and lasting until one-half hour after the serving of breakfast and lunch. Any exception must be approved by the principal.

St. Joseph School's Wellness Committee establishes the following actions to meet nutrition guidelines

Conditions for school meals:

- a. Students will be provided adequate time to eat. In general, students will have at least 15 minutes in their classroom to eat Grab and Go Breakfast. In general, students will have at least 20 minutes to eat lunch.
 - b. Students will be provided with a self-serve fruit and vegetable bar along with multiple choices. Our food service program is an offer versus serve, allowing students to choose their meal.
 - c. No food is sold to students before, during, or ½ hour after school hours.
 - d. Fundraisers do not include the selling of food with little to no nutritional value.
 - e. Effort shall be made to establish acceptable eating conditions. The factors that promote these conditions will be a clean, orderly environment, pleasant atmosphere, adequate seating, and enforcement of student conduct rules and staff supervision.
1. Selection of School Meals:

St. Joseph Catholic School, York, NE

School Wellness Policy – March 2026

- a. School meals shall meet the minimum nutrition requirements established by state and federal law.
 - b. Emphasis on good menu planning principles that offer healthy food choices including lean meats, a variety of fresh fruits, and non-fried vegetables daily, whole grains, and low-fat or nonfat milk either flavored or white. These choices shall be located where they are readily available to ALL students.
 - c. Effort will be made to involve students with meal planning and provide opportunities for students to taste test foods prior to introducing them into the menu.
- 2. Limit portion sizes and desserts and fried foods.**
- a. Elementary students are to be offered balanced meals. Elementary students will not be sold individual food or beverage selections.
 - b. Middle school students may be sold foods and beverages ala carte as deemed appropriate by the SWC.
 - c. Parents will be encouraged through newsletters and other promotional materials to make healthy choices for student lunches when students bring their meals from home.
- 3. Foods available during the school day.**
- a. Water will be available to students throughout the school day and at no cost during lunch. At the discretion of the classroom teacher, students are allowed to have water bottles in the classroom with a secure cap. Drinking fountains are equipped with water bottle filling stations and available throughout the school day for all students.
 - b. Food for classroom celebrations must be pre-packaged with the ingredients listed. No home-baked goods for safety and food allergy concerns. Parents and staff are encouraged to find non-food or healthy food alternatives from the list provided for classroom celebrations including individual birthdays and special occasions
 - c. Food Rewards are discouraged, particularly food with minimal nutritional value. This will be monitored by the principal.
 - d. Definition of foods of Minimal Nutritional Value has the same meaning as in the federal regulations for the National School Lunch Program. Specific foods include, but are not limited to:
 - Soda pop, energy drinks
 - Water ices except those which contain fruit or fruit juices
 - Chewing gum
 - Processed Candy

St. Joseph Catholic School, York, NE

School Wellness Policy – March 2026

- Fruit snacks or gummies
 - Non-baked potato chips
 - Cake, cookies, brownies
- e. Definition of Healthy Foods means food that are not foods of minimal nutritional value, and that are low in fats, sodium and sugars and high per serving in the nutrients needed to meet Reference of Daily Intakes.
- 4. School Environment**
- a. School buildings and grounds, playground equipment and structures shall meet all current health and safety standards, including air quality, and be kept inviting, clean, safe, and in good repair.
 - b. School building shall maintain an environment that is free of tobacco, alcohol, and illegal drugs. This applies to all staff, students, and visitors.
 - c. Safety procedures and appropriate training for students and staff shall support personal safety and a violence and harassment free environment.
- 5. Communication of Policy with Parents and Community Members**
- a. The school will actively inform families each year of basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates to the policy and implementation status. The school will make this information available through the school newsletter and on the school website [www](#).
 - b. At least once every three years, the committee will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and let families and community members aware of the availability of the Triennial Progress Report.

Reviewed and Approved: April 2026

Next Review: 2029

Stakeholders: Students, Parents

Teachers: Katy Eaton, Kennedie Reeve, Lexi Lacina, Angela Johnson, Diane Neujahr, Jenny Cook, Teresa Heiser, Cindy Lackey, Diane Fletcher

Physical Education Teacher: Hazel Ceros

School Secretary: Michelle Koch

Principal: Ken Heinz

Food Service Director: Belinda Rodriguez

Pastor: Fr. John Sullivan

School Advisory Board Members: Brian Staehr, Melissa Flynt, Neivy Rodriguez, Carrie Colburn

St. Joseph Catholic School, York, NE
School Wellness Policy – March 2026