

SARALAND CITY SCHOOLS

Comprehensive Wellness Plan



2024-2025

Dr. Brent Harrison, Superintendent

"Building a Foundation for Student Success"

Saraland Board of Education



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The mission of Saraland City Schools' Wellness Committee is to equip students with the knowledge and skills to lead healthy, productive lives.

Saraland City Schools Wellness Committee

Originally Adopted: 2008

Revised: November 2012, March 2017,
June 2020, March 2023, March 2024

Saraland City School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its program and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

"Building a Foundation for Student Success"

OUR GOAL

By implementing the Comprehensive Wellness Plan, Saraland City Schools will comply to all federal, state and local requirements as they relate to developing the “whole child” through various initiatives and programs related to wellness. The wellness plan will be evaluated through yearly increased participation of students in program offerings.



“Promoting healthy behaviors among students is an important part of the fundamental mission of schools: to provide young people with the knowledge and the skills they need to become healthy and productive adults. Improving student health can:

- *Increase students’ capacity to learn,*
- *Reduce absenteeism, and*
- *Improve physical fitness and mental alertness.”*

*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
School Health Index (2000)*

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROBLEM

- For children and adolescents aged 2-19 years in 2017-2020, the prevalence of obesity was 19.7% and affected about 14.7 million children and adolescents (Centers for Disease Control, 2023)
- Health conditions that are considered obesity-related include high blood pressure, high cholesterol, type 2 diabetes, breathing problems such as asthma and sleep apnea, and joint problems. (Centers for Disease Control, 2023)
- Childhood obesity is associated with a higher chance of obesity, premature death and disability in adulthood. (World Health Organization, June 9, 2021)
- According to the State of Childhood Obesity website 2023, 22.1% of youth ages 10-17 have obesity, giving Alabama a ranking of 6 among the 50 states and D.C. and 17.2% of high school students are obese.
- Physical Activity for youth can build strong bones and muscles, can increase physical fitness, may reduce anxiety and depression, and promotes positive mental health. (Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs Guide from CDC)

The research listed presents an alarming reality that today's schools, communities, and families are faced with addressing. Recognizing the value of school meals and good nutrition, Saraland City Schools urges educators, administrators and school board officials to create healthy school environment through adopting sound nutrition-food service environment policies. This Wellness policy has been developed to protect the health of Saraland students so they may achieve their full academic potential.

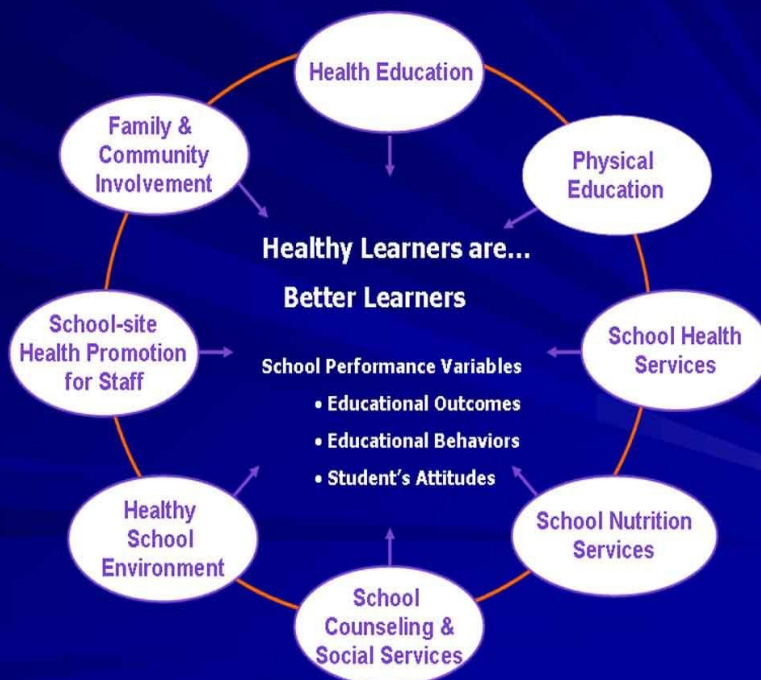
The Wellness Plan encompasses the recommendations for nutrition and exercise provided by the Alabama State Department of Education. This plan helps to provide a school environment that models health promotion and takes action to combat the rising health risks in children. The normal school day is for most children nearly one-half of their waking hours. The school nutrition-food service environment is an important and critical partner with physical activity and nutrition education in improving children's health. All Saraland City Schools shall adopt the plan with the opportunity to add to but not diminish the contents in order to meet the individual cultural needs of the school community.

USE OF RESEARCH BASED MODELS

The Wellness Committee was organized in 2008 when the Saraland City Schools was established in order to help tackle the problems of increased incidence of childhood obesity and inactivity. The diseases that are caused or exacerbated by obesity and inactivity are life threatening and cause a burden for the children, the medical community, and society in general. Unhealthy children cannot learn and develop physically, mentally, and emotionally appropriate. The Wellness Committee of Saraland City Schools consists of school nurses, PE teachers, food and nutrition employees, and parent volunteers. The committee meets twice each year to evaluate current goals and guidelines and to establish new goals and guidelines.

The Alabama State Department of Education's Implementation Guidelines for Exercise and Nutrition Recommendations of September 12, 2005 were also instrumental in guiding the development of this policy.

Coordinated School Health Program Model



The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, GA is an agency of the United States Department of Health and Human Services. The CDC developed an eight component model for the Coordinated School Health Program. The model, along with the WellSAT-I and WellSAT:3.0, was utilized in developing this policy.

PURPOSE

Saraland City Schools is committed to providing a school environment that enhances learning and promotes the development of lifelong wellness practices. All students shall possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make decisions regarding nutritious and enjoyable food choices and appropriate physical activities for promoting a healthy life. In addition, all school staff are encouraged to model healthy behavior supporting a healthy lifestyle. A wellness committee has been established to assist school administrators in the preparation, adoption, and implementation of a comprehensive plan to promote healthy lifestyles that includes a healthy school environment, nutrition education, physical activity, and quality food service operation.

PHASE I - OBESITY AND PHYSICAL EXERCISE

- The school environment is safe, comfortable, pleasing, and allows ample time and space for eating meals.
- Food and/or physical activity are not used as a punishment or food as a reward.
- Sequential and interdisciplinary nutrition education is provided and promoted in PreK – 12th grades.
- Engaging students in age and developmentally appropriate physical activity that supports lifelong physical wellbeing.
- All school-based activities are consistent with local wellness policy goals.
- All foods and beverages made available on campus (including vending, concessions, a la carte, school stores, parties, and fundraising) during the school day are consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and Alabama State Department of Education Guidelines.
- All foods made available on campus adhere to food safety and security protocols.
- The Child Nutrition Program will be accessible to all children and comply with federal, state, and local requirements taking into consideration cultural norms and medical dietary needs.
- Opportunities and encouragement for all staff to model healthy habits for lifelong wellness.
- Communicating to the community the importance of good nutrition, exercise, and a healthy lifestyle.
- All broadcast media utilized within the school setting will be continuously evaluated for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle.
- Evaluations will be completed annually utilizing the WellSAT assessment tool.

HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Student and staff shall have adequate space to eat meals in pleasant surroundings and shall have adequate time to eat, relax, and socialize. Safe drinking water and convenient access to facilities for hand washing and oral hygiene must be available during all meal periods.

- The National Association of State Boards of Education recommends that students should be provided adequate time to eat. A minimum of at least 10 minutes for breakfast and 20 minutes for lunch should be allowed from the time the student is seated.
- Lunch periods should be scheduled as near the middle of the school day as possible. Cafeterias should include efficient amounts of serving areas and dining tables.
- Schools should not establish policies, class schedules, bus schedules, or other barriers that directly or indirectly restrict the student's access to meals or the completion of meals.

Rewards & Incentives

Rewards and incentives for academic performance should be given careful consideration as to the messages they send to students receiving them. If food is included in recognition of academic performance, it should be used in the general celebration of the achievement not as the reward. Foods shall not be used as a reward or withheld from students as punishment. Physical activity cannot be used as punishment.

School Programs

School programs should encourage school gardens, farm to school programs, farmer's markets, and similar programs to increase the availability and consumption of Alabama-grown fruits and vegetables whenever possible.

Physical Fitness— Before, During, & After School

Careful consideration of the school lunch environment shall be taken into account when scheduling activities. The importance of physical activity for children of all ages and supervised playtime for younger children shall be duly acknowledged. The Center for Disease Control defines physical activity as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that result in an expenditure of energy. It is encouraged that schools provide activities before lunch or at a different time than lunch.



HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Commercial Advertising

Partnerships between schools and businesses are encouraged and business sponsorship of educational activities and materials shall be duly acknowledged. However, such partnerships shall be designed to meet identified educational needs and reflect healthy school environment goals.

Advertising of foods or beverages in the areas accessible to students during the school day must reinforce the objectives of the educational and nutrition environment goals of the school and be consistent with established nutrition environment standards.

“Advertising may be described as the science of arresting the human intelligence long enough to get money from it.” Stephen Butler Leacock, Canadian humorist

Vending Machine Fronts

Elementary and Middle Schools—

All vending machine fronts will picture water or 100% fruit juice products with no added sweeteners.

High Schools—All vending machine fronts other than those located in athletic spectator settings (e.g., football stadiums) will be water and 100% juice products with no added sweeteners.



HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Nutritious Food Choices

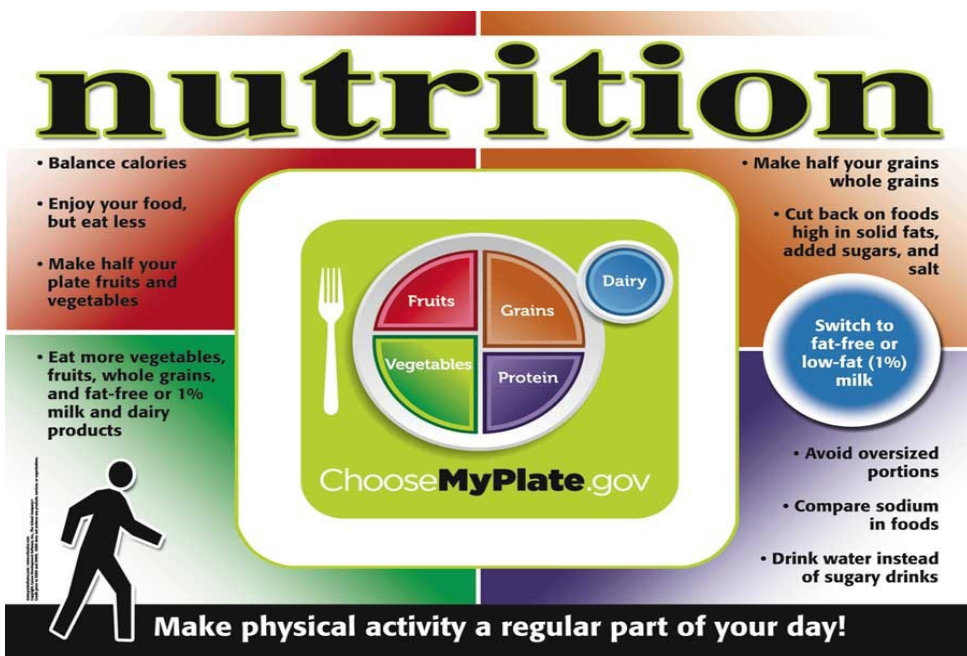
Healthy and appealing foods should be available through cafeteria meals and a la carte items.

Food and beverages sold or served on school grounds or at school-sponsored events during the normal school day shall meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and/or other nutrition standard guidelines as set forth by USDA and the Alabama State Department of Education.

These guidelines apply to the following areas:

- The child nutrition program;
- A la carte offerings in the child nutrition program;
- Food and beverage choices in vending machines, snack bars, and school stores;
- Food and beverages sold as part of school-sponsored fundraising activities; and,
- Refreshments served at student parties, celebrations, and meetings

This wellness nutrition plan has been developed to protect the health of Saraland City Schools' students so they may achieve their full academic potential.



Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value as defined by USDA are prohibited from being served or sold anywhere a reimbursable meal is served, sold, and/or eaten. Foods of minimal nutritional value as defined by USDA include carbonated beverages, water ices, chewing gum, hard candies, jellies and gums., marshmallow candies, licorice, spun candy, and candy coated popcorn.

HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Nutritious Food Choices

School personnel should pay special attention to portion sizes and assist students in selecting the appropriate amount of food.

Portion Size:

- Chips (baked with no more than three – 7.5 grams of fat per bag), crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, and pretzels – **1.25 ounce**.
- Low-fat cookies/cereal bars – **1 ounce**.
- Low-fat bakery items (pastries and muffins). Be sure and check the carbohydrate content. Most low fat items replace the fat with sugar – **2 ounces**.
- Frozen dairy desserts, low fat ice cream, pudding and gelatin fruit bowls – **4 ounces**.
- Yogurt (low fat) less than 30 grams Carbohydrates – **4 ounces**.
- Beverages – water (any size).
- Other drinks (sports, 100% juice, low-sugar smoothies etc.) – **12 ounces**.
- 1% or less fat milk – **8 ounces**.

Foods of good nutritional content including fresh Alabama grown fruits and vegetables, low-fat dairy foods (1% or less as the standard beverage), and low-fat grain products, shall be available whenever food is sold in the cafeteria and vending machines at school during the normal school day. Schools shall take efforts to encourage students to make nutritious food choices.

Foods of minimal nutritional value may not be served during the lunch period, or sold in vending machines, or school stores. Schools are encouraged to limit availability of these food items to students.

Healthy food items, as determined by USDA, are acceptable as a component of a complete meal. Foods sold through vending machines, cafeterias, and school stores will follow the Alabama's Action for Healthy Kids standards. Schools are encouraged to serve a variety of healthy food items.

1 to 1.5 ounce servings of snack foods are:

- Low or moderate in fat (10% or less Daily Value of total fat)
- Have less than 30 grams of carbohydrate (10% or less Daily Value of total CHO)
- Have less than 360 mg of sodium
- Contain 5% Daily Value or more (10% is healthiest) of at least one: Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, or calcium
- Contain fiber (5% Daily Value)

HEALTHY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Food Sales

Food sold will follow the federal, state, and local policy for sale of competitive foods.

The management of foods sales on school grounds not under the direction of the Child Nutrition Program shall be the responsibility of the local administrator to follow federal, state, and district guidelines. The nutrition environment requirements set forth in this policy must be maintained.

Foods sold for fundraising purposes are prohibited during meal times. All foods served during school hours must comply with regulations of USDA and the Alabama State Department of Education. All fundraising activities that involve the selling of food should reinforce food choices that promote good health.



Beverage Sales

Elementary Schools and Middle Schools – Only non-carbonated beverages are to be sold or served to students in grades PreK - 8.

High Schools – Only non-carbonated flavored or unflavored water, 100% fruit juices, milk, tea, and sports drinks. Any carbonated beverages must be no/low calorie beverages, contain no more than 25 calories, and may not exceed 20 ounces.



Foods with Minimal Nutritional Value & Fundraising

Except when medically contraindicated, no one on the school campus will provide access to “for sale” or “free” foods and beverages of minimal nutritional value as described above. Foods and beverages that have as the first ingredient: sugar, corn syrup, shortening, lard, or similar, may not be available to students on school grounds during the normal school day. This includes school parties. Persons responsible for this compliance include school administrators, staff, students, student groups, parents, parent groups, or any other person, company or organization.

NUTRITION EDUCATION

Each area of curriculum will provide nutrition education in a format that students can use on a daily basis to make healthier food choices. Students will have the opportunity to plan a meal in the cafeteria following guidelines set forth by USDA and the Child Nutrition Program.

Nutrition education instructional activities shall stress the appealing aspects of healthy eating and be participatory, developmentally appropriate, and enjoyable. The program shall engage families as partners in their children's education.

Nutrition education topics shall be integrated into all areas of the curriculum such as math, science, language arts, and social studies taught at every grade level, pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade. The nutrition education program shall focus on students' eating behaviors, be based on theories and methods proven effective by published research, and be consistent with the state's health education guidelines. Nutrition education shall be designed to help students learn:

- Nutritional knowledge, including but not limited to the benefits of healthy eating, essential nutrients, nutritional deficiencies, principles of healthy weight management, the use and misuse of dietary supplements and safe food preparations, handling and storage.
- Nutrition-related skills, including but not limited to planning a healthy meal, understanding and using food labels, and critically evaluating nutrition information, misinformation, and commercial food advertising.
- How to assess one's personal eating habits, set goals for improvement, and achieve those goals.
- Healthy beverages, and low-fat grain products, shall be available whenever food is sold in the cafeteria and vending machines at school during the normal school day. Schools shall take efforts to encourage students to make nutritious food choices.



OUR STAFF

Staff Qualifications

All faculties shall be adequately prepared and participate annually in professional development activities to effectively deliver the nutrition education program as planned. Preparation and professional development activities shall provide basic knowledge of nutrition, combined with skill practice in program-specific activities and instructional techniques and strategies designed to promote healthy eating habits.



Staff as Role Models

All school staff is encouraged to model healthy eating behaviors. Schools should offer wellness programs that include personalized instruction about healthy eating and physical activity.

EDUCATIONAL REINFORCEMENT

- School instructional staff shall collaborate with agencies and groups conducting nutrition education in the community to send consistent messages to students and their families. Guest speakers invited to address students shall receive appropriate orientation to the relevant policies of the school/district.
- PTA/PTO will present information on Nutrition education in at least one meeting each school year to promote positive food choices for a healthy lifestyle. Nutrition Education will positively influence students' eating behaviors through the involvement of the parents, faculty, staff, and PTA/PTO organizations.
- Nutrition and physical activity education that encourages parents to teach their children about health and nutrition will be provided throughout the school year. Nutrition education and physical activity will be communicated to the community in the form of newsletters, emails and web pages.
- Students will be encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast at home or school.
- All broadcast media utilized within the school setting will be continuously evaluated for the promotion of a healthy life-style.

COORDINATION OF PROGRAMS

The Child Nutrition Programs shall be closely coordinated with nutrition instruction. The school cafeteria shall serve as a learning laboratory to allow students to apply critical thinking skills taught in the classroom. Food service staff shall also work closely with those responsible for other components of the school health program to achieve common goals. The Comprehensive Wellness Plan should be implemented through the entire school environment.

The Career and Technical Education Programs shall provide a consistent learning experience that reinforces the objectives of the school Child Nutrition Program and will comply with the Comprehensive Wellness Plan where appropriate.

Saraland City Schools

NUTRITION-RELATED HEALTH PROBLEMS AND MODIFIED DIETS

School counselors and school health services staff shall consistently promote healthy eating to students and other staff. These professionals shall be prepared to recognize conditions such as obesity, eating disorders, and other nutrition-related health problems among students and staff and be able to refer them to appropriate services.

The Child Nutrition Program will comply with USDA's disability requirements for modified diets. The school child nutrition program is strongly encouraged to meet ethnic dietary requests as recommended by the USDA.

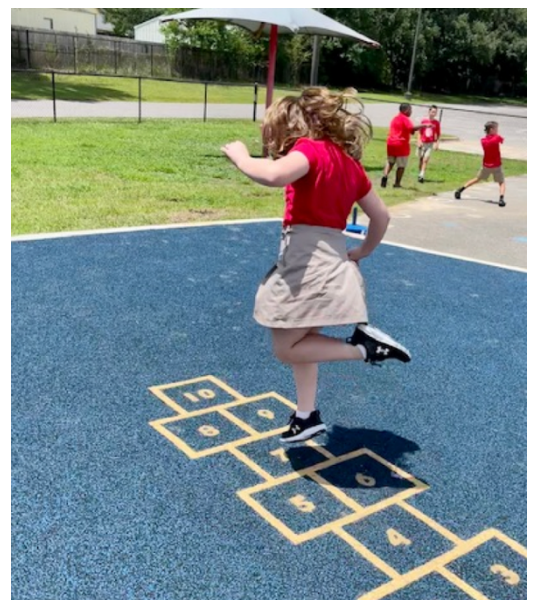
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND A HEALTHY SCHOOL

Physical education courses should be the environment in which students learn, practice, and are assessed on developmentally appropriate motor skills, social skills, and knowledge. Physical activity involves bodily movement that results in an expenditure of energy of at least a moderate intensity level and for duration sufficient to provide a significant health benefit for students.



Children and adolescents, ages 6-17, should accumulate one hour (60 minutes)* of vigorous of physical activity daily. This can be accomplished through several periods of physical activity lasting 15 minutes or more each day. Aerobic, muscle strengthening, and bone strengthening are encouraged.

**Youth Physical Activity Guidelines, CDC.gov*



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND A HEALTHY SCHOOL

Recommendations for Physical Education during the Normal School Day

- Daily physical education classes must be taught or supervised by state-certified physical education teachers.
- Provide an adequate amount of time for physical education classes. Physical Education class times shall follow the guidelines set forth by the Alabama Department of Education.
- Ensure that physical education classes have a teacher/student ratio comparable with those of other classes.
- Ensure that students are moderately to vigorously active at least 50% of the time while participating in physical education classes.

Implement a sequential physical education course of study consistent with national standards for physical education and with a focus on students' development of motor skills, movement forms, and health-related fitness.

Provide a physical and social environment that encourages safe and enjoyable activity for all students, including those who are not athletically gifted.

Prohibit the use of physical activity as punishment, the withholding of participation in physical education class as punishment, or the use of physical education class time to complete assignments from other classes.

The Alabama State Department of Education has a “no exceptions/no substitutions” policy for district or school-wide physical education waivers. Any such waiver requests must be reviewed by the State Superintendent of Education. Daily physical education is required in grades K-8. Recess or lunch time activities should not be substituted for the physical education program.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND A HEALTHY SCHOOL

Encouraging Lifetime Physical Activity

Schools should increase physical activity breaks before, during, and after the normal school day.

The plan should include:

- Coordination and communication with teachers, civic organizations, PTAs/PTOs, sports organizations, and wellness councils that share the common goal of developing activity opportunities and events for students.
- Collaboration with local government to make infrastructure changes that encourage students to participate in physical activities (i.e., improvements to parks, playgrounds, and bike trails).

Schools shall offer opportunities for organized activities such as intramural sports, clubs, self-directed activities, open gym, special events, field trips, instructional and practice opportunities, exercise classes, alternative exercise classes to reduce stress and lunch time activities.

Schools are encouraged to provide community access to school's physical activity facilities outside of the normal school day. All students and community members should be encouraged to use the facilities.

Schools should encourage after-school childcare programs to provide developmentally appropriate physical activity for participating children and reduce or eliminate the time spent in sedentary behaviors, such as watching television or online activities.

Schools should encourage parents and community members to provide a range of developmentally appropriate sports and recreation programs that support physical activity and are attractive to all young people.

FOOD SERVICE OPERATION

The management of the child nutrition program will be under the direction of the Child Nutrition Program and Cafeteria Managers.

It is acknowledged that the feeding of children is primarily a family responsibility. To supplement their efforts, every school shall operate a child nutrition program to ensure that all students have affordable access to the varied and nutritious foods they need to stay healthy and learn well. The child nutrition program shall aim to be financially self-supporting.



FOOD SERVICE OPERATION

Program Requirements

During each school day, the child nutrition program shall offer breakfast and lunch under the nutritional guidelines of the USDA's National School Lunch and Breakfast Program. Each school shall encourage all students to participate in these meal opportunities. In particular, the school shall make efforts to ensure that families are aware of need-based programs for free or reduced-price meals and eligible families are encouraged to apply.

The program shall maintain the confidentiality of students and families applying for or receiving free or reduced-price meals.

For more information on free or reduced lunch visit:

fns.usda.gov/cn/applying-free-and-reduced-price-school-meals

The school child nutrition program shall operate in accordance with the National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 as amended and applicable laws and regulations of the state of Alabama. Schools shall offer varied and nutritious food choices that are consistent with the federal government's "Dietary Guidelines for Americans" refers to the current set of recommendations of the federal government that are designed to help people choose diets that will meet nutrient requirements, promote health, support active lives, and reduce chronic disease risks. Menus should be planned with input from students, family members, and other school personnel and should take into account students' cultural norms and preferences. Food pricing strategies shall be designed to encourage students to purchase nutritious items. Procedures shall be in place for providing to families, on request, information about the ingredients and nutritional value of the foods served.



The school child nutrition program shall monitor the nutrient breakdown of their menus. Regardless of menu planning, the child nutrition program shall analyze the menus offered to students to ensure that USDA guidelines are being met.

FOOD SERVICE OPERATION

Staffing

Saraland City Schools shall employ a Food Service Director who meets the educational requirements as specified in the standard in the Code of Alabama (1975), 290-080-030-06, to administer the child nutrition program and satisfy reporting requirements.

Dining room staff shall receive appropriate training in how to maintain safe, orderly, and pleasant eating environments.

The Food Service Director will offer appropriate up-to-date staff development training for all food service personnel on an annual basis and as needed as guidelines and responsibilities change.

The Food Service Director and staff are encouraged to inform and collaborate with classroom teachers regarding the school nutrition-food service environment, cultural norms, and nutrition education.

Food Safety

All Child Nutrition staff have current food handler permits from the Mobile County Health Department. Almost all Child Nutrition staff members are also certified by ServSafe, a nationally recognized standard for food safety. For the safety and security of the food and facility, only Child Nutrition staff and authorized personnel can have access to the food service operations.

All food service equipment and facilities must meet applicable local and state standards concerning health; safe food preparation; handling, and storage; drinking water; sanitation; and workplace safety. The district goal is to have 95% of all Health Department cafeteria ratings to be greater or equal to 95.

All foods available in the cafeteria must comply with the state and local food safety and sanitation regulations. Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) plans and guidelines are implemented to prevent food illness in schools.

HELPFUL WEBSITES FOR GOAL ATTAINMENT

HitMeal – Nutrition Tracker App

Online features:

- Easy to use tool for tracking exact foods eaten
- Very large food database consisting of 400,000 food items and over 5,000 brands and restaurants
- Best in class iPhone app for tracking your diet on the go
- Detailed visual progress tracking - graphs, pies and more!

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Resources on physical education and physical activity: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/>

Nutrition: <https://www.webmd.com/parenting/raising-fit-kids/food/rm-quiz-kids-portion-sizes>

Team Nutrition: <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>

USDA Choose MyPlate: www.ChooseMyPlate.gov

Changing the Scene – Improving the School Nutrition Environment:
<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/changing.html>

Fruits and Vegetables Galore: Helping Kids Eat More:
http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/fv_galore.html

For Great Snacks for your Kids – Delish: <http://www.delish.com/cooking/g1147/quick-kids-snacks/>

Sleeping Habits:

<http://school.sleepeducation.com/resources/top10healthysleephabits.pdf>

Immunizations:

https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents/childhood-vaccines/index.html?s_cid=PN-NCIRD-Childhood-AW-GeneralImmunizations-Phrase-IZ-E2