



First State Montessori Academy

Deep Roots, New Branches

Wellness Policy

First State Montessori Academy (FSMA) Charter School is committed to the optimal development of every student. We believe that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success, we need to create a positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environment at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity, before, during and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. This policy outlines our school's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice 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 at FSMA have access to healthy foods throughout the school day, both through reimbursable school meals and from other foods available throughout the school campus, in accordance with federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active before, during, and after school;
- Our school engages in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of FSMA in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- FSMA will establish and maintain an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the Policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all students, staff and volunteers of First State Montessori Academy.

School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

FSMA will convene a Wellness Committee that will meet 2-4 times per academic year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the Wellness Policy.

Our Wellness Committee membership will be assembled to incorporate the Head of School, Nursing staff, Physical Education teacher, and Food Services Liaison. To the best extent possible, we will include representatives from the community to reflect the diversity of FSMA. Our membership will represent all school levels and include, to the best extent possible, but not limited to: parents and caregivers, students, physical education teachers, health education teachers, school health professionals, mental health and social services staff, school board members, and the general public.

Leadership

An FSMA Wellness Policy Coordinator will ensure compliance with the Policy by ensuring that the Committee convenes to discuss, initiate and facilitate goals to be addressed in the development of a Wellness Policy, as well as ensure school compliance. The members of the Committee will convene to facilitate development of and update FSMA’s Wellness Policy as needed.

| Name | Title | Email Address | Role |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| Courtney Fox | Head of School | Courtney.Fox@fsma.k12.de.us | Coordinator/Director of annual reports and ensure compliance of school |
| Rebecca Adeleke | RN | Rebecca.Adeleke@fsma.k12.de.us | School & Teacher compliance/Minutes/Policy updates as needed |
| Jennifer Boulianne | Physical Education/Health Education | Jennifer.Boulianne@fsma.k12.de.us | Fitness Advising/Health Education/ Adequate recess time |
| Laurie Murray | RN | Laurie.Murray@fsma.k12.de.us | School & Teacher compliance/PTO compliance |

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|-------------------|------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Michelle Figueroa | Food Services Liaison/Parent | Michelle.Figueroa@fsma.k12.de.us | Volunteer & Kitchen staff compliance |
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Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement

Implementation of Plan

1. Roles: As listed above and subject to change as needed or as Wellness Committee grows.
2. Responsibilities: Each role has specific areas to address and ensure that the school, classrooms, teachers, staff, volunteers, and community respond positively to policies and implement goals where needed.
3. Actions and timelines: Teachers will compile periodic progress reports and give to Committee in order to communicate lesson plans and field trips that correlate with policy goals. Field trip information will be found on the main school calendar. The Committee will discuss plans, and current implementation to ensure goals are being met within the classrooms. In addition, Physical Education Teacher, Nurses, and Food Services Liaison will collaborate to ensure that activity and nutritional needs are met on an ongoing and consistent basis in accordance with the federal and state guidelines.

Record Keeping

FSMA will retain records to document compliance with requirements of the Wellness Policy. These documents will be held within the Nurse’s Office and on FSMA’s central computer network. Documentation will include:

1. The written Wellness Policy;
2. Documentation of requests for community involvement, including active solicitation of members, and documentation of participation by above named group members in development, implementation and periodic review and update of the Policy;
3. Annual progress reports and teacher reports throughout the year;
4. Triennial assessment of the Policy; and
5. Compliance with public notification requirements and the means by which information is made known to the public including efforts to notify families of its availability.

Annual Progress Reports

FSMA will draft and release an annual progress report that will allow the community and school members to be aware of our current Policy, changes, and ongoing commitments to healthy nutrition and physical activity. This annual report will be published by **September** of each academic year. It will be included on FSMA’s website for the public to view and will describe

our policy goals, events and activities specific to our Wellness Policy implementation, as well as positions and titles and how to get involved with the Committee.

FSMA will establish and monitor goals and objectives for our school as appropriate and notify households/families using electronic notification via email and/or newsletters from teachers that our progress report is available on the website to view prior to September and throughout the year as needed.

Triennial Progress Assessments

Every three years, or more often as needed, FSMA will evaluate compliance with the Wellness Policy to assess the implementation of this policy and include:

- The extent to which FSMA's Wellness Policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Model Wellness Policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of our school's Wellness Policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment will be assigned by the Wellness Committee. This Committee member will notify households and families of the availability of the triennial progress report with the same methods as described above for our Annual Progress notification.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

FSMA's Wellness Committee will update or modify the Wellness Policy based on results of the annual progress reports and triennial assessments, school priority changes, changes in community needs, attainment of wellness goals, availability of new health and science classes or programs, developments in technology, and/or as new federal and state guidance or standards are issued. Recommendations for changes or revisions to the Policy will be made through these reports.

Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communication

FSMA is committed to being responsive to our community input. The Wellness Committee, in conjunction with FSMA, will actively communicate ways others may participate in the development, implementation, review, and update of the Policy. FSMA will also provide information about progress and improvements made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, with Smart Snacks in School, and School Nutrition standards. The Committee will use technology in the form of email, website, and newsletters to encourage participation and updates to the policy so that families and the community can be actively involved and notified. The Committee will also make communication culturally and linguistically appropriate for the community at FSMA. The Committee will do the above at least once a year, depending on the need to communicate changes to the Policy. FSMA will also use

these methods mentioned above to notify families and community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports. Information can also be presented to FSMA's families and community during Back to School Night or during PTO meetings to encourage open discussion and solicit ideas from our parents/family members/caregivers.

Nutrition

School Meals

FSMA is committed to serving reimbursable healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk, which are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and contain zero grams *trans*-fat per serving (per nutrition label or manufacturer's specification), and which meet nutritional needs of school children within their caloric requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of our school children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns, and support healthy choices, while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs. FSMA provides breakfast meals through the USDA School Breakfast Program which are ready for children when they come to school within their own classroom. FSMA offers school meals that:

- Are accessible to students;
- Accommodate dietary restrictions, including food allergies;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Are served with appropriate supervision to ensure rules for safe behavior are consistently enforced; and
- Meet or exceed current nutritional requirements established by the USDA and which meet local, state and federal statutes and regulations. USDA standards are available at <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2012-01-26/pdf/2012-1010.pdf>

FSMA will implement at least three of the following four Farm-to-School activities:

- Classroom education about agriculture and nutrition reinforced throughout the learning environment;
- School hosted field trips to local farms;
- Host a school garden, if feasible; and
- Utilization of promotions or special events, such as food tastings, that highlight local/regional products.
 - During available times, local agricultural products will be incorporated into school meal program or classroom health activities that promote nutritional education.
 - Students will have the opportunity to provide input on local, cultural and ethnic favorite foods.

FSMA will promote healthy food and beverage choices as they apply to our Montessori setting by following the USDA's Smarter Lunchroom tools (available on the USDA website) including:

- Making sliced or cut fruit available daily, or as often as possible, rather than fruit juice;
- Including a daily vegetable and fruit option in all grab-and-go meals available to students (Packaged and delivered foods to classroom);
- Student surveys and/or taste testing opportunities used to inform menu development;
- Allowing students at least 10 minutes or more to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch, beginning when they receive their meals and sit down to eat (students are not permitted to leave the grounds of FSMA to obtain breakfast or lunch during the school day);
- Serving students lunch at a reasonable part of the day;
- Serving only fat-free or low-fat milk during the school day and promoting consumption of white milk over other beverages; and
- Posting menus on the FSMA website.

FSMA is committed to protecting the privacy of all students who qualify for free or reduced priced meals. This information is strictly confidential and is not shared with food service directors, managers, or staff, or with teachers. Teachers charge all students who receive complete meals without knowledge of which students pay cash or which students qualify for assistance. Applications for free or reduced priced meals are available on FSMA's website, www.firststatemontessori.org, at Back to School night or upon request.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the day. This includes being available at meal times. In addition, students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with water only with them throughout the day.

- Water fountains are found on each floor of both buildings.
- Water bottle refilling stations are located in both buildings.
- All water sources, including drinking fountains, water jets, and sinks, will be cleaned and sanitized on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene standards.

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered on the school campus intended for child related activities are to meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutritional standard, including:

1. Encouraging use of non-food related activities for classroom celebrations and parties. A list of healthy party ideas that meet Smart Snack standards will be provided to parents and teachers (from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and USDA).
2. Classroom snacks brought in by parents.
3. Afterschool functions and clubs.
4. Smart Snack standards are available at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/smart-snacks-school>

Fundraising

Only foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the school campus during the school day. The Committee will make a list available to parents, teachers and PTO for healthy fundraising ideas:

- Healthy fundraiser options include but are not limited to:
 - Non-food fundraisers such as fundraisers that encourage physical activity (walk-a-thons, jump rope for heart, fun runs)
 - Fundraising during school hours will sell only non-food items or food and beverages that meet or exceed the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Nutritional Promotion

Nutritional promotion and education positively influences lifelong eating behaviors by using evidenced-based techniques and nutritional messages. FSMA will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school's campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. The following will also be promoted:

- Respect for our bodies and how to best care for them with healthy nutrition options;
- Confidence in our decisions;
- Openness to engage in healthy nutrition conversations with students;
- Including nutritional education within classrooms for both practical life, and educational tools; and
- USDA approved snacks and beverages.

Nutrition Education

FSMA aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating habits by students. Montessori learning environments value educational efforts in both the classroom and through hands-on manipulation of material, practical-life skills, field trips and excursions, and curriculum related outings such as gardening, games and song. FSMA will provide nutritional education and engage in nutritional promotion that:

- Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Is part of health education classes, and is integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social studies, practical life and specials;
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally relevant, and active participation activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, taste-testing, farm visits, and school gardens;
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and
- Includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff. The USDA Professional Standards for State and Local Nutrition Programs are followed at FSMA to ensure that professional development in the area of food and nutrition is provided for food service directors, managers, and staff.

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

Nutrition related topics shall be integrated within the comprehensive health education curriculum and will be taught at every grade level, Kindergarten through 8th grade. FSMA will include in the nutrition education curriculum and health education program, which are both aligned with state and federal standards, the following essential topics on healthy eating and nutrition:

- The relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention;
- Food guidance from MyPlate;
- How to read food labels;
- Guidance with meal planning;
- The importance of eating a variety of foods every day;
- How to balance food intake with physical activity;
- The importance of eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products;
- How to choosing foods and beverages with smaller amounts of added sugars;
- The risks of unhealthy weight control practices;
- The importance of accepting body differences;
- Basic food safety;
- The importance of water consumption;
- The importance of eating breakfast; and
- Strategies for resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior.

Physical Activity

Physical Exercise

FSMA will implement a comprehensive physical activity program that provides physical activity throughout the school day and addresses the needs of students, staff and the school community. Children and adolescents should participate in 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of this can be obtained through a school-based physical activity program that includes: physical education, recess, classroom-based physical activity, walking to/from school, utilizing steps to access classrooms rather than elevators, and after school activities provided by FSMA. Many field trips taken by FSMA students are to locations within walking distance of the school campus. With the assistance of Wilmington's Downtown Visions, students will be escorted on walking field trips to several sites in close proximity to FSMA throughout the year.

Physical activity such as recess or physical education will not be withheld as punishment for any reason; however, this does not include clubs or sports. A list of alternatives may be provided in this situation.

FSMA is committed to and will ensure to the best extent possible, that the grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. FSMA will conduct inspections and repairs of equipment as needed.

Physical Education

FSMA will provide students with Physical Education, using an age-appropriate, sequential Physical Education curriculum consistent with national and state standards. The Physical Education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage life-long healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts. Physical Education classes will have the same student/teacher ratios used in other classrooms and will be taught by a certified and licensed teacher who is endorsed to teach Physical Education.

All students in grades Kindergarten through 8th grade will be provided equal opportunity to participate in Physical Education classes, and all students are required to take Physical Education classes. Elementary school students shall receive 150 minutes per week of Physical Education instruction, and middle school students shall receive 225 minutes per week of Physical Education instruction throughout the school year. FSMA will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt Physical Education classes and equipment as necessary. Students will not be exempted from the required Physical Education classes unless there are extenuating circumstances. Participation in outside sporting activities will not be treated a substitute for required Physical Education class time or credit. Individualized fitness and activity assessments via Fitness Gram will use criterion-based recording for students.

FSMA will ensure that all Physical Education teachers will have annual professional development opportunities available to them which focus on physical education and physical activity topics and competencies specific to Physical Education teachers.

Essential Physical Activity Topic in Health Education

FSMA will include in the Health Education curriculum the essential topics listed below for physical activity when health education is taught and/or when classroom topics are relevant. Montessori curriculum develops a multitude of activities that are added to the classroom experience that strengthen the body-kinesthetic union. Physical activity topics discussed within the classroom are followed up by experiences such as field trips, curriculum outings, outdoor play, games, performing arts, drama, dancing, role play, athletic games and musical concerts. Specific topics below will be introduced within and outside of the classroom:

- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Differences between physical activity, exercise, and fitness
- Phases of exercise session: warm up, workout, cool down
- Health related fitness: cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- The physical, psychological, or social benefits to physical activity
- Opportunities for physical activity in the community
- Importance of decreasing sedentary activities such as video games and TV
- Preventing injury during physical exercise
- Weather related safety: sunburn, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia

Recess (Elementary Students)

All students in elementary grades will be offered at least 20 minutes of recess on all or most days during the school year; however, this policy may be waived on early dismissal or late arrival days. If recess is offered prior to lunch, hand-washing time and time to put away coats/hats/scarves must be allotted and will be built into the recess transition period prior to eating. Sinks are available in every Montessori classroom in the Lower School and bathrooms are available on every floor in the Upper School, and should be offered to the students to use prior to eating lunch and/or snacks. In the event that handwashing is not readily available to students, alcohol-based hand sanitizer with an alcohol content of 60-95% must be offered to disinfect hands prior to eating.

Outdoor/open air recess will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play. Students will be allowed outside to play except when temperatures are outside of the recommended guidelines including wind chill factors, heat-index warnings, and storms. In the event that FSMA must conduct indoor recess, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students to the best extent possible.

Recess is a complement to, not substitute for, Physical Education class.

Physical Activity Breaks

Opportunities to be active or to stretch throughout the day are offered to students often or as needed. These activities may include stretching opportunities, yoga within the classrooms, and movement about the building. FSMA recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Middle Schoolers will be offered a twenty minute mid-morning break each day to provide students with physical activity opportunities. At times, when applicable, sensory breaks for movement will also be promoted. Physical activity breaks and movement are encouraged and an important part of the Montessori classroom.

Active Academics

Within the Montessori framework, it is common that teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when applicable. Walking to field trips, for example, is encouraged when feasible. FSMA staff is encouraged to do their part to limit sedentary behaviors during the day when applicable.

FSMA supports classroom teachers to incorporate physical activity and employ kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects and will supply resources, opportunities, and material needed in order to make the connection between learning and movement. Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Before and After School Activities

FSMA offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity after the school day through a variety of methods. FSMA will encourage students to be physically active before and after school by providing the following:

- Girls on the Run – community or staff volunteers will run with students to raise physical activity and confidence for female students;
- Dance Works;
- Tennis in the Streets;

- After school clubs that incorporate physical education and activity, such as yoga, Capoeira, ballet, dance, or Zumba;
- After school sports that incorporate physical education and activity, such as basketball, volleyball, and soccer; and
- After school clubs that provide nutritional education and hands on learning within the USDA guidelines.

Community Health and Promotion and Engagement

FSMA will promote to parents/caregivers/families and the general community the benefits of and approaches to healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

As described in the “Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communication” subsection, FSMA will use electronic means and/or non-electronic means to ensure that all families are notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and are able to receive information about health promotion efforts.

Professional Learning

When feasible, FSMA will offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to gain knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school, ie. using kinesthetic teaching approaches or including nutrition lessons in curriculum instruction. The Montessori classroom already focuses on and encompasses the idea and value of varied learning and bodily kinesthetic intelligence. Our staff is excited to continue professional learning that helps develop the understanding of the connections among academics, health, and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing school reform and academic improvements and efforts.

Wellness Promotion and Marketing

FSMA staff are encouraged to model healthy behavior and eating and drinking behaviors for all students. Teachers and staff are encouraged to drink water in the classrooms and have access to water bottle refilling stations in both the Lower and Upper Schools. Teachers who choose to eat breakfast, snack, or lunch with students are encouraged to eat healthy foods and drink healthy beverages as a model for the students. Teachers and staff are provided with a lunch break daily and are not required to eat with students. Participating in physical activities or exercise breaks with students, while voluntary, provides an opportunity for teachers and staff

to impress upon students the importance of physical activity and allows teachers to share positive experiences about exercise with their students.

An employee wellness program will be implemented to meet the unique wellness needs of school staff. Annual flu shots will be offered as well as services such as blood pressure screenings will be available to staff. Staff will be offered opportunities to coach sports or lead after-school clubs such as yoga, Zumba, Capoeira, etc.

FSMA students are encouraged to participate in after-school sports or other non-competitive physical activity programs via school announcements and newsletters. Information about sports offered at FSMA is available on the school's website at www.firststatemontessori.org and also through the main office.

Nutrition and physical activity will be incorporated into family events throughout the school year such as the Vocabulary Parade, the Happy Hearts Dance, and Field Day. Parents are encouraged to participate in parents vs. students competitions during sporting activities such as basketball and volleyball. Nutrition education, particularly as it relates to new nutrition standards, will be available on FSMA's website or will be communicated via classroom newsletters, as pertinent.

FSMA does not permit the advertising of food or beverages on school property. Food and beverage that does not meet the USDA nutritional standards for the National School Breakfast and National School Lunch programs or the USDA Smart Snacks in School program are not available for sale at FSMA. In addition, students will not be exposed to food marketing in any of FSMA's school media outlets or publications. Care will be taken to avoid educational material for the classroom that includes advertising of food or beverage or illustration of unhealthy food consumption. FSMA will not participate in incentive programs that promote or advertise brands of food or drink or that provide students with free or discounted foods or beverages that do not meet USDA standards.

The ultimate goal of First State Montessori Academy's Wellness Policy is to provide a framework to teach, encourage, model, and support good nutrition selections and physical activity practices that will become positive life-long lifestyle choices for our students, staff and volunteers.

Final Policy submitted for approval May 21, 2020 by FSMA Wellness Committee.