

Columbus Catholic Schools
Scotus Central Catholic, Saint Anthony, Saint
Bonaventure, and Saint Isidore Elementary
Schools

Wellness Policy 2024-2026

Mission statement

A unified school community that equips students to know, love, and serve God through intentional faith formation and academic excellence.

Therefore, it is the policy of Columbus Catholic Schools of that:

- The school will engage students, parents, teachers, nutrition service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing school wide nutrition, education, physical activity, and mental health policies.
- All students in grades K through 12 will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- The school counselors provide access to mental health professionals and social/emotional skills for students and staff.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Qualified child nutrition professionals will provide students with access to a variety of nutritious, affordable, and appealing foods that meet their health and nutrition needs, accommodate the religious, ethnic and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning, and provide a clean and safe environment for students with adequate time allotted to eat.
- To the maximum extent practical, the school will participate in the federal school meal program.
- The school will provide nutrition education, physical activity, and emotional support to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating, physical activity, and mental wellbeing.

Wellness team

- Columbus Catholic Schools will create, strengthen, and work with the existing wellness team to develop, monitor, review and as necessary revise school nutrition and physical and mental health education policies. Serving as a resource for implementing these policies.
- The wellness team will be built of a group of individuals representing the school and community and should include parents, students, school food service personnel, members of the advisory board, school administrators, teachers, health professionals and members of the public.
- Nutrition services director, managers and staff are trained annually according to the USDA Professional Standards for Child Nutrition Professionals and continue to be trained when needed throughout the year to advance the goals of the wellness team.

Food and Nutrition Services

Columbus Catholic Schools will follow the USDA Professional Standards for State and Local Nutrition Programs to ensure that professional development in the area of food and nutrition is provided for food service directors, managers and staff. New and current food service directors must have at least 12 hours; new and current managers must have at least 10 hours; new and current staff must have at least 6 hours.

Nutrition Standards

Nutritional qualities of food and beverages sold and served on campuses.

Meals served through the national school breakfast and lunch program will meet nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations. Good menu planning will be used to offer healthy foods. Choices will include lean meats, a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and low-fat or fat-free milk products.

Availability of Water

A water fountain with an automatic water bottle filling machine is available by the cafeteria for students to use. Water cups are available in the cafeteria.

Time allotted for Student Meals

Breakfast through the USDA School Breakfast Program will be offered at Scotus Central Catholic on full days between 7:15 am-8:00 am. No breakfast will be served on early out days and late starts. Students can take their time in the cafeteria to eat and finish breakfast before classes. No breakfast is offered at the elementary schools.

Lunches at all sites are served during 25-minute-long lunch periods on normal school days. Average serve time is 6-7 minutes allowing approximately 17-18 minutes of sit time for students to eat lunch.

Free and reduced meals

Columbus Catholic Schools will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to and prevent the identification of students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. All students, regardless of payment, are given a barcode to use at registers eliminating cash or identification of payment status. The cafeterias are cashless—all students, regardless of the type of payment they make for school meals, or the food being purchased (meal or a la carte) are given a badge and/or code to enter at the cash register.

Students' unpaid meal balances will be kept private. Parents will be notified by email of negative balances. Students will be allowed a reimbursable meal without ala carte options until money is deposited into their account. Schools will reach out to the family of a child with an unpaid balance to assess whether the child is eligible for free or reduced price meals.

Applications for free/reduced priced meals are sent home to all families at the beginning of the school year. The application is also available on the Columbus Catholic School website.

A la carte items

A la carte items are offered in compliance with the USDA regulations and meet the *Smart Snack* school guidelines during meal periods. Fruits are offered as a la carte items.

Student meals from home

Parents and students will be encouraged through promotional materials in the cafeteria, website, and newsletter to make healthy food choices for student lunches from home.

Competitive beverages

Beverages available to students include 100% fruit or vegetable juices with no added sugars, bottled water, low fat or skim milk, and zero-calorie sports drinks and flavored waters. Beverages containing high sugar and calorie content will not be sold during the school day. Beverages containing caffeine will not be sold on any school campus during active school hours.

Competitive foods

No food in competition with the school lunch or breakfast program will be sold or otherwise made available to students for sale anywhere on the school premises starting prior to serving breakfast lasting until after the school day has ended.

Vending & Food Sales

The sale of foods of minimal nutritional value which do not meet smart snack regulations are not allowed on school property in areas accessible to students until after the end of the school day.

Fundraising

To support children's health and school nutrition education efforts, school fundraising activities that take place during the school day will not involve food or will use only food that meet nutrition and portion size guidelines for food and beverages sold individually according to the smart snack criteria. There are no exemptions. Columbus Catholic Schools will encourage fundraising activities that promote physical activity.

Snacks and Smart Snack Guidelines.

Snacks served during the school day in the classrooms and food service area will make a positive contribution to children's diet and health, with an emphasis on serving fruits and vegetables as the primary snacks and water or milk as a primary beverage. Beverages containing caffeine will not be sold on any school campus during active school hours. Columbus Catholic Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, students' nutritional needs, students ages and other considerations. The complete Smart Snack standards can be located on here at [USDA "A Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools"](#) . Faculty and staff are encouraged to follow *the guide to smart snacks in school*. Items that are not clearly identified as a qualified smart snack can be assessed for inclusion using the ["Smart Snack Calculator"](#) from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation.

Rewards

Columbus Catholic Schools will discourage the use of food or beverages for academic performance or good behavior. Columbus Catholic Schools will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment.

Celebrations and After School Programs

The school will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day. When snacks are used for classroom or religious celebrations, they should be considered healthy, therefore promoting student well-being. All celebrations involving food should be approved by the administration with knowledge of the wellness policies. Snacks sold or provided to children participating in on-site school affiliated programs after school ends will meet USDA Smart Snack nutrition standards.

Family and community

Family members and community members are encouraged to become actively involved in programs that provide physical activity and nutrition education such as Farm to School projects, Columbus Catholic Schools/Parish fun run, and the alumni sports tournaments. Parents are also invited to join students for school meals in the Columbus Catholic Schools cafeterias. The CCS schools encourage community volunteers to assist in serving and supervising in the cafeterias during lunch service.

Physical Education and Activity

Columbus Catholic Schools participates in a physical and nutrition health education available for all K - 12th students. The curriculum for grades K-12 will be aligned with national and/or state physical education standards. CCS's comprehensive, standards-based physical education curriculum identifies the progression of skill development in grades K-12. Physical education curriculum revision will follow a formally established periodic review cycle congruent to other academic subjects. All educators of physical and nutrition education obtain a valid Nebraska teaching certificate with a physical education endorsement for specific grades.

Physical activity is designed to promote student wellness and skills needed for lifelong physical fitness. Physical education will be directed but not limited to the following curricular goals:

- Physical activity and exercise are beneficial for physical health, recreation, social skills, teamwork, and mental health.
- Activities should provide students with the knowledge to continue physical activities throughout their lifetime.
- Participation in physical exercises and activities should be age and gender appropriate.
- Students in physical education classes will spend approximately 60% of the class engaged in moderate to vigorous activities.
- Students in physical education classes will improve their fitness levels 90% of the time between entering the class (Aug. or Jan.) and exiting the class (Dec. or May), through a series of fitness and or muscular strength tests.
- Physical handicaps do not diminish the worth of people.
- Physical activity within the physical education classes will not be used or withheld as punishment.
- Students will be provided with physical activity opportunities before and after school in all elementary, middle, and high schools.
- The elementary schools shall provide at least 20 minutes of active daily recess to all elementary school students.
- All schools will provide at least one physical activity break for every 60 minutes of academic instruction daily.
- Columbus Catholic Schools will develop joint use agreements with community partners in order to provide expanded physical activity opportunities for all students and community members.

The Whole Athlete's Wellbeing

Columbus Catholic Schools has a full-time athletic trainer who works with the athletic programs of Scotus Central Catholic all year. At the beginning of each season and during the summer, our athletic trainer works with our athletes about their physical health, but also positive eating and drinking habits, as well as good sleep habits.

Student athletes utilize an online neurocognitive testing that includes baseline and post injury testing. They are also subject to return to learn and return to play protocols to ensure safety of the student athlete.

Students with disabilities who cannot actively participate in athletics but who have an interest are invited to be team managers and are given appropriate duties and responsibilities as part of the team. Interested students are encouraged to talk with coaches or the athletic department to learn about how to become a part of these opportunities.

Columbus Catholic Schools offers athletic opportunities in accordance with the Nebraska State Activities Association (NSAA) and provides coaches and competitions for these sports.

Other activities and club opportunities beyond NSAA sports are available for students like cheer and dance teams. All these groups practice and compete on a regular basis, both at Columbus Catholic Schools facilities.

In the 2022-23 school year approximately 70% of all Scotus Central Catholic School students participated in a level of sport within the school not including community involving sports which many students are involved with as well. This is above the national report of 57% which does include community sports.

Nutrition and Wellness Education and Support

The base goal is to implement a curriculum that meets the Nebraska nutrition education objectives steps by the Nebraska Department of Education.

Curriculum: Nutrition education will be integrated into other subjects to complement, but not replace, the health and nutrition education curriculum that is provided in accordance with NDE Rule 10.

Educators are encouraged to incorporate the promotion of healthy nutrition lifestyles in all subject areas for all grade levels as appropriate. Nutrition curriculum will provide the knowledge and skills necessary to promote healthy choices. The Floriculture and Horticulture class will work with the Scotus Cafeteria staff to develop a school garden and composting program. The elementary schools will utilize the 4-H Enrichment Program that provides education in nutrition, exploration of agricultural and sustainable food production.

Display Nutrition Education Materials: Columbus Catholic Schools Food and Nutrition department will display posters and other communications to promote healthy nutrition choices appropriate for the students served. Posters, such as MyPlate posters will be on display in the cafeteria to promote healthy choices. Educators are encouraged to incorporate such communications in the classrooms.

Farm to School and use of Local Indigenous foods: Columbus Catholic Schools participates and promotes the use of healthy local foods and support of the local agricultural system in our community. Farm to School is implemented and sustained in the breakfast and lunch program, classroom curriculum, and community involvement. School meals will include fresh, locally grown foods in school meals from farms engaged in sustainable practices whenever possible and these foods will be promoted in the cafeteria.

Emotional Wellbeing: Columbus Catholic Schools will recognize and support students and staff dealing with emotional, social, and mental wellness. All schools will provide life skills services through the teaching, counseling, and clergy staff. Staff are encouraged to take advantage of personal growth opportunities available such as mental health symposiums when available.

Nutrition and Mental Health Events: Educators are encouraged to search for and take advantage of events that promote nutrition and mental health education.

Activities and Support may include:

- health fairs
- Blood Drives
- field trips to farm or food production facilities
- school greenhouse/garden/landscaping activities
- listening and engaging with nutrition and mental health speakers

Spiritual Wellness

Spiritual Opportunities for Faculty, Staff & Students:

- Theology/Religion Class: Every student takes a Theology Class taught by a Priest, Deacons, Certified Teacher and trained lay persons.
- Mass
 - Optional **Mass** (Liturgy) offered before school every day.
 - **All School Mass** (Liturgy) offered roughly once a month.
 - **Perpetual Adoration** offered on Anthony's and Scotus Campus
 - **Daily prayer and reflection**
- Confessions:
 - **Confessions** offered before and after school weekly.
- Group Activities:
 - Every seventh-grade student is part of the Shepard Program that pairs them with a Junior or Senior student throughout the year.
 - Rock Talk – monthly
 - Class retreats for grades 7-12.
 - Campus ministry events weekly
 - Rosary Club
 - Morning prayer and/or rosary

Staff Wellness

Columbus Catholic Schools highly values the health and well-being of every staff member and will plan and implement activities and policies that support personal efforts by staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. This wellness team will develop, promote, and oversee a multifaceted plan to promote staff health. The wellness plan should be based on input solicited from school staff and should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among school staff. Columbus Catholic Schools staff members are encouraged to serve as healthy role models for students by engaging in the above stated plan.