

## **Wellness Policy of The Benedictine School**

### **List of Committee Members**

Chair; Lars Hansen, Compliance Coordinator, CRCCPA

Will Murlock, The Benedictine School

Jena Fletcher, Benedictine Residential

Mary Winstead , RN

Peggy Dooley, Benedictine Teacher

Brenda Piolet-Olive, Parent

Lisa Thomas, Benedictine Food Service

Alison Markey, Benedictine HR

Ashley Hazenstab, Dietician

### **Introduction**

The Benedictine School has created this Wellness Policy in order to improve the health of our Students and Residents by looking at all matters which may impact their health and well-being here and, within the limit and the scope of our area, do what we can in a cooperative environment including the students, our staff and parents. This policy has been crafted with input from the abovementioned shareholders and has, to a certain extent, been tailored to the unique challenges faced by staff/children in relation to Developmental Disabilities.

Initially, the Committee met monthly to formulate this policy. Once this policy is approved, this Committee will begin meeting quarterly to discuss on-going initiatives as well as propose new initiatives which will keep the idea of wellness at the forefront and allow the Committee to discuss and help implement any new wellness related policies originating in State or Federal government and given to us in the form of regulation or directive (this to include relevant memorandums from Maryland's State Department of Education Food Service). Should action be required before a regularly scheduled meeting of this committee can be held, the Chair of the Committee will invite the Committee to a special session so that we can assure timely compliance with that guidance.

The goal of this Committee and The Benedictine's Wellness Policy is clear: To improve the health of our Benedictine family.

### **Policy of the School Food Program (USDA – Federal Regulations)**

Due to restrictions put on Benedictine by Federal regulations, special diets or dietary additions must be by Doctor's Order (this Committee has approved a form for this purpose), and we are bound to follow

MSDE School Food Program guidelines without exception, so it is strongly suggested that these orders contain specifics on what the student can and cannot eat. The order must be based on a Doctor's assessment of what can be demonstrated as required for health reasons, for example due to allergies, and not based on preferred diets. The Benedictine School will make every effort to accommodate religious dietary restrictions as long as doing so does not conflict with State and/or Federal regulation.

Our Wellness Policy and the work of our Wellness Committee are in keeping with Federal Law mandating the existence of these. We are striving to not only meet these legal requirements, but to exceed these wherever possible as we seek to promote wellness throughout the Benedictine community of programs.

It should be noted that The Benedictine School, its Programs and Services, are all based on a principle of non-discrimination. This is integral to our Food Program as well as the work of The Wellness Committee.

Part of this ongoing effort will focus on snacks, as our Kitchen already follows strict dietary regulations for the main meals of the day; it is incumbent upon this committee to assure that healthy diets are maintained outside of and beyond our school kitchen. In this connection, we are studying current snacks in order to determine how closely they follow the guidelines for healthy snacking, also known as "Smart Snacks". The committee will also make every effort to make information available to interested parties on smarter snacking and healthier eating habits as well as encourage both our residents and staff to be physically active and make healthier dietary choices, both on the job and off.

#### **Policy on Physical Activity (Policy on Physical Education and Promoting Student and Staff Health)**

- Physical Education class, coordinated by certified P.E. Instructors, takes place in an environment suitable for physical activity and those areas deemed safe for such activities.
- Students learn and practice physical education skills that are developmentally appropriate to enhance overall wellness, motor skills, and social skills.
- Realizing that staff at Benedictine must serve as wellness leaders and examples for our students, Benedictine has put in place various wellness programs specifically targeted at improving staff wellness and increasing their sensitivity to wellness. We do this mindful that staff's eating and exercise habits at home and the workplace will likely affect staff support of Wellness policies at work and that a healthy staff is more likely to model healthier choices to our students,
- Daily Exercise goals for students: Daily 30 minute fitness periods in the classroom, either before or after lunch, help supplement our Physical Education classes,
- All exercise equipment is suitable to our student population and the use of this equipment by students is monitored by staff.
- After school, this Wellness Policy is supported within the Residential milieu – fitness walking and swimming are regular activities after school. Many of our students enthusiastically take part in Special Olympics.

#### **Policy on Wellness Education for Parents, Staff and Students**

It is one of the goals of the Wellness Committee to assist and encourage the following developments:

- Promoting healthy food choices (including when on outings),

- Help parents make healthier choices for their kids when they are home, and
- Helping parents understand the need for specific Doctor's Orders when requesting a special diet.

### **Policy on Marketing**

In order to avoid inadvertently marketing unhealthy food options to our students, we have resolved to move any and all vending machines not containing healthy snacks or drinks to areas that are not accessible to our students during the course of a normal school day,

We have also resolved that should we engage in any fund raising activities involving the sale of food items, that these items be beneficial to the overall wellness of our Benedictine community.

We are monitoring all contributions of school supplies and other materials to assure that no logos promoting unhealthy food choices appear on school supplies or elsewhere on campus,

We are studying the exclusive use of healthy food items for Behavioral Supports. As the nature of behavioral supports are highly individualized, these must be determined on a case-by-case analysis of what works and what is realistic for each individual student while in keeping with our Campus Wide goal of Wellness.

### **Policy on a Tobacco-Free Campus**

As a part of our overall Wellness Policy, Benedictine is committed to maintaining a healthy work environment for all our staff, students and adult clients. In keeping with this commitment use of tobacco products is prohibited throughout the Ridgely campus, our community group homes as well as within Benedictine vehicles.

Use of tobacco products is also prohibited off premise when working with students and adults during field trips and other recreational or vocational activities.

This policy applies equally to all employees, clients, and visitors.

Staff members who wish to stop smoking can reach out to The American Heart Association. They are an excellent source for information on various smoking cessation programs. Benedictine's Employee Assistance Program, Life Work Strategies, offers free consultation regarding wellness issues including smoking cessation.

### **Policy on a Drug-free Campus**

Employees are required to report to work in appropriate mental and physical condition to perform their jobs in a satisfactory manner.

While on *Benedictine* premises and while conducting business-related activities off *Benedictine* premises, no employee may use, possess, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job only if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals in the workplace.

Violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment, and/or required participation in a substance abuse rehabilitation or treatment program. Such violations may also have legal consequences.

Employees with questions or concerns about substance dependency or abuse are encouraged to discuss these matters with their supervisor or the Human Resources Department to receive assistance or referrals to appropriate resources in the community.

Employees with drug or alcohol problems that have not resulted in, and are not the immediate subject of, disciplinary action may request approval to take unpaid time off to participate in a rehabilitation or treatment program through *Benedictine's* health insurance benefit coverage or any other certified program of rehabilitation or treatment appropriate for the problem. Leave may be granted if policies, rules, and prohibitions relating to conduct in the workplace support the leave; and if granting the leave will not cause *Benedictine* any undue hardship.

Under the Drug-Free Workplace Act, an employee who performs work for a government contract or grant must notify the employer of a criminal conviction for drug-related activity occurring in the workplace. This requirement applies to all *Benedictine* employees. The report must be made to the employee's supervisor and the Director of HR within five days of the conviction.

To help ensure a safe and healthy working environment, job applicants and employees may be asked to provide body substance samples (such as breath, urine, and/or blood) to determine the illicit or illegal use of drugs and alcohol. Refusal to submit to drug testing may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. If an employee is involved in a vehicular accident while conducting *Benedictine* business, *Benedictine* may require the employee to submit to a drug screen on the day the accident occurs.

*Benedictine* may randomly test employees for compliance with its drug-free workplace policy. As used in this Policy, "random testing" means a method of selection of employees for testing, performed by an outside third party. The selection will result in an equal probability that any employee from a group of employees will be tested. Furthermore, *Benedictine* has no discretion to waive the selection of an employee selected by this random selection method.

### **Policy on Monitoring and Reporting out the activities and achievements of the Wellness Policy**

- This Committee will report out its work using the various media available to us, for example we intend to use the Internet (the school website) and "The Beeline" to report out policies, achievements and new initiatives coming out of the Wellness Policy and its dedicated Committee,
- The Committee will summarize The Wellness Policy and move to include it in the school's Parent Student Handbook and invite parents to take part in the work of the committee,
- The Chair will author an Annual Review and Report of the Committee's work and aims for the following year,
- The Chair will submit this annual report to the Executive Director of the *Benedictine* School.

This Committee actively encourages participation by interested parties in Ridgely and/or Caroline County. If you would like to participate, please contact Lars Hansen at (410) 634-2112 x 1255