

## **THE ACADEMIES CHARTER MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION**

### **STUDENT WELLNESS POLICY**

The Board of Directors of The Academies Charter Management Organization (“TACMO” or the “Charter School”) is committed to promoting the development of the whole child. TACMO believes that for students to achieve desired learning outcomes and attain optimal cognitive, social-emotional, and physical development, we must first create a positive, safe, supportive, and health-promoting learning environment.

Recent research in neuroscience, education, sociology, and other fields confirms that a whole child approach is not only desirable but necessary to ensure that children achieve academic success. The whole child approach focuses on fostering a supportive school environment, implementing meaningful instructional practices, developing social-emotional skills, and creating an integrated system of support for students. Underlying any approach to student learning is the reality that many students are experiencing adversity which can include many other factors that impact a child’s ability to learn including food insecurity and neglect.

Good nutrition and adequate physical activity are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. A great body of evidence exists to support the link between good nutrition and physical activity for students with increased academic achievement and cognitive performance, improved attendance, and decreased behavioral issues. Additionally, establishing healthy behaviors during childhood is easier and more effective than trying to change unhealthy behaviors during adulthood. Schools play a critical role in promoting the health and safety of young people and helping them establish lifelong healthy behaviors.

This Policy outlines TACMO’s approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day to support student learning and healthy development. Specifically, this Policy establishes the following goals:

- Students in TACMO have access to healthy foods throughout the school day 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 the school day.
- TACMO engages in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness.
- Charter School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school.
- Charter School staff are provided with opportunities for professional development in wellness-related topics.

- The community is engaged in supporting the work of TACMO in creating continuity between Charter School and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits.
- The Charter School establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of this Policy and its established goals and objectives.

This Policy applies to all students and staff in TACMO. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

### **I. Charter School Wellness Council**

The Superintendent will facilitate the development of and updates to the Policy and will ensure each Charter School's compliance with the Policy.

The Superintendent or designee shall encourage parents/guardians, students, food service employees, physical education teachers, school health professionals, Board members, school administrators, and members of the public to participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the district's student wellness policy.

To fulfill this requirement, the Superintendent or designee may appoint a school wellness council or other district committee and a wellness council coordinator. The council may include representatives of the groups listed above, as well as health educators, mental health staff, after-school program staff, health practitioners, and/or others interested in school health issues.

The Superintendent or designee may make available to the public and school community a list of the names, position titles, and contact information of the wellness council members.

### **II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement**

#### ***Implementation Plan***

Using the steps outlined below, TACMO will ensure the Charter School meets legal obligations regarding the implementation of this Policy.

This Policy and the progress reports can be found at:  
<https://www.sycamorevalleyacademy.org/forms-and-docs> and  
<https://www.blueoakacademy.org/forms-and-docs>

#### ***Recordkeeping***

TACMO will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of this policy in the main office. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written Policy.
- Documentation demonstrating that the Policy has been made available to the public.
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements and community involvement requirements.
- Documentation of the triennial assessment of the Policy.
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the Policy has been made available to the public.

### ***Annual Notification of Policy***

TACMO will actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about this Policy, including its content, any updates to the Policy, and implementation status. TACMO will make this information available via the Charter School website and/or Charter School-wide communications. TACMO will provide as much information as possible about the Charter School nutrition environment. This will include a summary of Charter School's events or activities related to Policy implementation.

### ***Triennial Progress Assessments***

At least once every three years, TACMO will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the Policy and include:

- The extent to which the Charter School is in compliance with this Policy;
- The extent to which the Charter School's Policy compares to model wellness policies; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the Charter School's Policy.

The Superintendent will monitor the Charter School's compliance with this Policy.

TACMO will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

### ***Revisions and Updating the Policy***

TACMO will update or modify this Policy as appropriate based on the results of triennial assessments and/or as TACMO's priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. This Policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three (3) years, following the triennial assessment.

### ***Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications***

TACMO is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the Policy. TACMO will actively communicate ways in which representatives of the Charter School and others can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of this Policy through a variety of means. TACMO will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

TACMO will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the Charter School's website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to this Policy, as well as how to get involved and support the Policy. The Charter School will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community and accomplished through means similar to other ways that other local schools are communicating important school information with parents.

The Charter School will actively notify the public about the content of, the implementation of, and any updates to the Policy annually, at a minimum. TACMO will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

### **III. Nutrition**

#### ***Charter School Meals***

School meal services are provided under contract with an external vendor. Through the current contract with Visalia Unified School District Nutrition Services Department, TACMO participates in USDA child nutrition programs. These programs include the National School Lunch Program ("NSLP"), the School Breakfast Program ("SBP"), the After School Snack Program, the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program ("FFVP"), and when approved by the California Department of Education, the Summer Food Service Program ("SFSP"). The Charter School is committed to ensuring the contracted vendor offers school meals through the NSLP and SBP, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students.
- Are appealing and attractive to children.
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings.
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations (The Charter School offers reimbursable school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards).
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices

#### ***Water***

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day. TACMO will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.

#### ***Competitive Foods and Beverages***

The Charter School is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the Charter School campus during the school day support healthy eating. Any foods and beverages sold to students on campus during the school day (including the period from the midnight before, to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day) and served outside of the

Charter School meal programs (e.g., “competitive” foods and beverages) will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits.

### ***Celebrations and Rewards***

All foods offered on the Charter School campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Charter School nutrition standards, including through:

- Celebrations and parties. TACMO will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas.
- Classroom snacks brought by parents. TACMO will provide parents a list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards.
- Rewards and incentives. TACMO will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a list of alternative ways to reward children. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

### ***Fundraising***

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Charter Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the TACMO campus during the school day. TACMO will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas.

### ***Nutrition Promotion***

TACMO will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus. This promotion will occur through at least:

- Implementing evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using Smarter Lunchroom techniques described above; and
- Ensuring 100% of foods and beverages promoted to students meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Charter School nutrition standards.

### ***Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools***

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards such that only those foods that comply with or exceed those nutrition standards are permitted to be marketed or promoted to students.

As the Superintendent or designee reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment, and product purchasing, decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by this Policy.

## **IV. Physical Activity**

The Centers for Disease Control (“CDC”) recommends that all children and adolescents participate in a minimum of sixty (60) minutes of physical activity every day. The CDC recommends that aerobic activity make up the bulk of such physical activity, with vigorous-intensity aerobic activity on at least three days per week. The CDC also recommends that physical activity include muscle-strengthening activities, such as gymnastics or push-ups, on at least three days per week, and bone-strengthening activities like jumping rope or running at least three days per week. The Charter School has the following specific goals to promote student wellness through physical activity, consistent with this Policy:

- All students shall be provided opportunities to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Opportunities for moderate to vigorous physical activity shall be provided through physical education and recess
- Opportunities for physical activity may also be provided through school athletic programs, extracurricular programs, before- and after-school programs, summer learning programs, in-class physical activity breaks, and other structured and unstructured activities.
- School community events promoting physical activity will be prioritized.
- Ensure Physical Education Teachers maintain appropriate credentials

In developing these goals, the Charter School reviewed and considered evidence-based strategies and techniques and parent input. TACMO will work toward the achievement of these goals by:

- Engaging students in regularly scheduled physical education instruction that meets or exceeds state requirements
- Promoting organized physical activity during recess
- Encourage the development of extracurricular athletic clubs within the school community
- Promoting regular activity challenges for students
- Implementation of active after school program curriculum within TACMO After School Programs
- Expanding access to physical activity opportunities outside of the school day

#### **V. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness**

TACMO will integrate wellness activities across the entire Charter School setting, not only in the cafeteria and physical activity facilities. TACMO will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, nutrition, and social-emotional wellness components so all efforts are complementary and work toward the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development, and desired educational outcomes. The Charter School has the following specific goals to promote social-emotional student wellness, consistent with this Policy:

- Explicitly teaching students self-regulation techniques and coping skills.
- Providing staff development in social-emotional wellness topics.
- Developing behavior interventions using a multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) approach.

- Providing on-campus student psychological services.

In developing these goals, the Charter School reviewed and considered evidence-based strategies and techniques and parent input. TACMO will work toward the achievement of these goals by:

- Adopting social-emotional learning curriculum.
- Employing a full time School Psychologist.
- Facilitating individual and small group social skills building.
- Fostering community building and relationship building organization wide.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state, or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of this Policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of parents and the school community.

All Charter School-sponsored events will adhere to this Policy's wellness guidelines. All Charter School-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

#### ***Community Partnerships***

TACMO will continue to build meaningful relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, etc.) in support of this Policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with this Policy and its goals.

#### ***Professional Learning***

When feasible, TACMO will offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school (e.g., increasing the use of kinesthetic teaching approaches or incorporating nutrition lessons into math class). Professional learning will help TACMO staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing district reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

This policy was formally adopted at a meeting of The Academies Charter Management Organization Board of Directors on October 21, 2021.



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Alex Tietjen, Board Secretary