

The Equity Project Charter School

Wellness Policy SY2024-25



The Equity Project (TEP) Charter School
Wellness Policy

Table of Contents

Preamble

I. School Health Committees

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Served on Campus

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

The Equity Project (TEP) Charter School
Wellness Policies on Physical Activity and Nutrition

Preamble

The Equity Project Charter School is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects children’s health, well-being and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.

Therefore, we will:

- Support each campus in providing opportunities for and encouraging all students to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Ensure that food and beverages served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Ensure that school meals provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet their health and nutritional needs while accommodating the religious, ethnic, and cultural food preferences of the student body.
- Ensure that students are provided with clean, sanitary settings and adequate time to eat.
- Participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program [including after-school snacks], Summer Food Service Program.
- Provide nutrition education and physical education to foster life-long habits of healthy eating and physical activity. Establish linkages between health education and school meal programs and related community service agencies.

The Equity Project Charter School is committed to providing school environments that promote and protect children’s health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of TEP that:

- The school will engage students, parents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing school-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.

The Equity Project (TEP) Charter School
Wellness Policy

- All students will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages 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 affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe, and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- To the maximum extent practicable, The Equity Project Charter School will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the National School Lunch Program).
- The Equity Project Charter School will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

TO ACHIEVE THESE POLICY GOALS:

I. School Health/Wellness Committee

The Equity Project Charter School will create, strengthen, or work within existing school teams and/or health committees to develop, implement, monitor, review, and, as necessary, revise school nutrition and physical activity policies. The committee also will serve as a resource for implementing those policies.

II. Nutritional Quality of Foods and Beverages Served at The Equity Project Charter School

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch Program will:

- be healthy, interesting and delicious to children;
- be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;

The Equity Project (TEP) Charter School
Wellness Policy

- offer a variety of fruits and vegetables;¹
- serve only low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk
- have water available at all meals

The Equity Project Charter School will engage students and parents, through meetings, orientations, and cooking opportunities, in selecting foods provided by the school meal programs in order to identify new, healthy, and appealing food choices. In addition, The Equity Project Charter School will share information about the content of meals with parents and students. Such information could be made available on menus, a website, food policies, on cafeteria menu boards, placards.

Meal Times and Scheduling.

The Equity Project Charter School:

- will provide students with at least 20 minutes to eat after sitting down lunch;
- will schedule meal periods at appropriate times, e.g., lunch should be scheduled between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., if possible;
- should not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during mealtimes, unless students may eat during such activities;
- will schedule recess periods before or after lunch, as possible;
- will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks; and
- should take reasonable steps to accommodate the tooth-brushing regimens of students with special oral health needs (e.g., orthodontia or high tooth decay risk), if needed and documented by the family or qualified medical professional.

Qualifications of School Food Service Staff. Qualified nutrition professionals will administer the school meal programs. At least one person will be certified by the NYC Health Department. As part of the school's responsibility to operate a food service program, we will provide continuing professional development for all nutrition professionals in schools. Staff development programs should include appropriate

¹ No fried vegetable will be offered. Schools are encouraged to source fresh fruits and vegetables from local farmers when practicable.

The Equity Project (TEP) Charter School
Wellness Policy

certification and/or training programs for food service employees, according to their levels of responsibility.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages. The Equity Project Charter School will discourage students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some children's diets.

The Equity Project Charter School strongly discourages bag lunch items brought from home, such as candy, soda, high-fat items and any other non-nutritive food items.

Beverages

- **Allowed:** water without added caloric sweeteners; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk and nutritionally-equivalent nondairy beverages (to be defined by USDA)
- **Not allowed:** fruit and vegetable juices including fruit-based drinks that contain at least 100% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners; soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sports drinks; iced teas; beverages containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk (which contain trivial amounts of caffeine).

Foods

- Follow the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast program guidelines and requirements.

Portion Sizes:

- Follow the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast program guidelines and requirements.

Snacks. Snacks served during the school day or in after-school care or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to children's diets and health, with an emphasis on including fruits and whole grains as part of the snack offering, and water will be available at all times. Schools will assess if and when to offer snacks based on timing of school meals, children's nutritional needs, children's ages, and other considerations. The school will disseminate a list of acceptable food/snack items to staff and families.

Rewards. The school will not withhold food or beverages (including food served through school meals) as a punishment.

Celebrations. Schools should limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. The school will disseminate a list of

The Equity Project (TEP) Charter School
Wellness Policy

healthy celebration ideas to parents and teachers.

III. Nutrition and Physical Activity Promotion and Food Marketing

Nutrition Education and Promotion. The Equity Project Charter School aims to teach, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. The School will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is part of health education classes, that supports subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, promotions, taste testing, farm visits, and/or school gardens;
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- links with school meal programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- includes training for teachers and other staff.

Integrating Physical Activity into the Classroom Setting.

For students to receive the nationally-recommended amount of daily physical activity (i.e., at least 60 minutes per day) and for students to fully embrace regular physical activity as a personal behavior, students need opportunities for physical activity beyond physical education class.

Toward that end:

- students receive daily Physical Education for 45-minutes, as part of their regular student programming
- classroom health education will complement physical education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically-active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television;



The Equity Project (TEP) Charter School
Wellness Policy

- opportunities for physical activity will be incorporated into other subject lessons; and
- classroom teachers will provide short physical activity breaks between lessons or classes, as appropriate.

Communications with Parents. The Equity Project Charter School will support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children. The school will encourage parents to pack healthy lunches and snacks and to refrain from including beverages and foods that do not meet the above nutrition standards for individual foods and beverages. The school will provide parents a list of foods that meet the school's snack standards and ideas for healthy celebrations/parties, rewards, and fundraising activities. In addition, the school will provide opportunities for parents to share their healthy food practices with others in the school community.

The Equity Project Charter School will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through a website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

IV. Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

Daily Recess. All elementary school students will have at least 20 minutes a day of supervised recess, during which school will support moderate to vigorous physical activity verbally and through the provision of space and equipment.

Physical Activity Opportunities Before and After School. The school will offer extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs or intramural programs. The school as appropriate, will offer interscholastic sports programs. The Equity Project Charter School will offer a range of activities that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of all students, including boys, girls, students with disabilities, and students with special health-care needs.

Physical Activity and Punishment. Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, pushups) or withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., recess, physical education) as punishment.

The Equity Project (TEP) Charter School
Wellness Policy

V. Monitoring and Policy Review

Monitoring. Designated leaders and administrative personnel will ensure compliance with established school-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies.

The school food service staff will ensure compliance with nutrition policies within school food service areas and will report on this matter to the Principal and CEO.

Policy will be reviewed on an ongoing basis.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.