

Local School Wellness Policy Region(s): DC

Rocketship is committed to the optimal development of every student. Rocketship believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success, we need to create positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that both good nutrition and physical activity— before, during, and after the school day— are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. In accordance with the requirements of the federal Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA, 7 C.F.R. parts 210 and 220)) and the DC Healthy Schools Act, this policy outlines Rocketship’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:

- Rocketship students have access to healthy foods throughout the school day - both through reimbursable school meals and 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;
- Schools engage 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 Rocketship in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- Rocketship establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

This Local School Wellness Policy (LSWP) applies to all students, staff and schools in the Rocketship network. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

I. Nutrition

School Meals

Rocketship is committed to serving healthy meals to students, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and zero grams trans fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer’s specification); and to meet the nutrition needs of students within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of 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.

All Rocketship schools participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). All schools within the Rocketship network are committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, 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.
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using at least ten of the following Smarter Lunchroom Techniques: Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets; Sliced or cut fruit is available daily; Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students; All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names; Daily vegetable options are bundled into all grab-and-go meals available to students; All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal; White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers; Alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas; A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to students (e.g., salad bars, snack rooms, etc.); Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor and promotional ideas; Student artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas; Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options.

Pursuant to Section 203 of the Healthy Students Act, Rocketship will offer free breakfast to all students (provided that at least 40% of students at a particular school qualify for free or reduced-price lunch, as Rocketship expects to be the case at all of its schools). Breakfast will be served in the classroom at the start of the school day. Rocketship will allow students adequate time to eat a nutritionally balanced breakfast.

Lunch will be served at a reasonable and appropriate time of the school day. Rocketship will provide students with adequate time to eat lunch.

During mealtime, Rocketship staff shall not discriminate or segregate students based on race, color, age, sex, disability, or national origin. Rocketship staff shall not withhold food as a punishment for students.

All school nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals. School nutrition personnel will refer to USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition website to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Food Services

In accordance with Section 203 of the Healthy Students Act, Rocketship shall provide breakfast and lunch for free or reduced cost to students who qualify through the federal FRL application and Direct Certification process. Rocketship will also provide meals that meet the dietary needs of students with diagnosed medical conditions as required by a licensed physician.

Rocketship will contract with food service providers that share a commitment to childhood wellness and that offer healthy meal choices that comply with all federal and local nutritional standards. Under Section 205 of the Healthy Students Act, food service providers will provide Rocketship with a menu for each breakfast and lunch meal served; nutritional content and ingredients for each menu item; and location where any fruits and vegetables served in the school are grown and processed, and whether growers are engaged in sustainable agricultural practices. Rocketship will post this information in the front office of all schools.

Rocketship will regularly evaluate the policies and vending contracts with all food service providers through check-ins and service-level agreements. Vending contracts that do not meet the requirements, intent or purpose of this Policy will promptly be modified or discontinued.

Water

To promote hydration, unflavored drinking water will be available for free to all students throughout the school day and throughout every school campus. Rocketship will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. In addition, students will be allowed to bring and carry water bottles filled with only water throughout the day, provided that the water bottle does not become a distraction or lead to behavioral infractions.

Foods and Beverages Sold Outside of Mealtimes

Rocketship is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus during the school day support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. 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.

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These standards will apply in all locations and through all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, a la carte options, school stores, and school fundraising activities.

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. This includes the following:

- Celebrations and parties. Rocketship teachers and/or School Leaders can provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas.
- Classroom snacks brought by parents.
- Rewards and incentives. Rocketship teachers and staff members will not use foods and beverages as a reward, or withhold foods and beverages as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

Fundraising

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the school campus during the school day.

Food Brought From Home

Students may bring a lunch and/or a snack from home, but Rocketship prohibits certain food items in furtherance of our focus on nutrition and health. Chips and cookies are not allowed unless included as part of a complete lunch (i.e. with a sandwich, fruit, vegetable, etc.). Gum, candy, soda, and fast food are prohibited on Rocketship campuses.

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff and teachers, parents, students, and the community. As such, Rocketship may prohibit students from bringing snacks to school that fall outside of the established USDA and Smart Snacks nutrition standards described above.

Rocketship will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through at least:

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

Nutrition Education

Rocketship aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. In accordance with DC Code § 38-824.02, Rocketship will provide an average of at least 75 minutes per week of health education to all students. Rocketship will meet the DC educational standards for health education and engage in nutrition education and promotion that:

- is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;

- is part of enrichment classes and integrated into other classroom instruction;
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, and participatory activities (i.e. cooking demonstrations or lessons, farm visits, and school gardens);
- promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods;
- emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- links with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm to School programs, other school foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and
- includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.

Rocketship will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 of the following essential topics on healthy eating (grade-appropriate): reading and using FDA's nutrition fact labels; eating a variety of foods every day; balancing food intake and physical activity; eating more fruits, vegetables and whole grain products; choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain trans fat; choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars; eating more calcium-rich foods; preparing healthy meals and snacks; risks of unhealthy weight control practices; accepting body size differences; food safety; importance of water consumption; importance of eating breakfast; making healthy choices when eating at restaurants; eating disorders; reducing sodium intake; social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers and culture; how to find valid information or services related to nutrition and dietary behavior; how to develop a plan and track progress toward achieving a personal goal to eat healthfully; resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior; influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior.

As required by Section 602 of the Healthy Schools Act, Rocketship will submit information about the average amount of weekly health education that students receive in each grade to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education by January 15 of each school year.

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

Rocketship is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Rocketship strives to teach students how to make informed choices about nutrition, health, and physical activity. These efforts will be weakened if students are subjected to advertising on Rocketship property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information that Rocketship is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is Rocketship's intent to protect and promote student's health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with this policy. 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.

For the purposes of this policy, “advertising and marketing” is defined as an oral, written, or graphic¹ statements made for the purpose of promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller, or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product. This term includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Brand names, trademarks, logos or tags, except when placed on a physically present food or beverage product or its container.
- Displays, such as on vending machine exteriors.
- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on school equipment, such as marquees, message boards, or scoreboards.
- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans, and other food service equipment; as well as on posters, book covers, pupil assignment books, or school supplies displayed, distributed, offered, or sold by Rocketship.
- Advertisements in school publications or school mailings.
- Free product samples, taste tests, or coupons of a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product.

II. Physical Activity

Children and adolescents should participate in 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Rocketship will help further this goal through a combination of physical education, recess, classroom-based physical activity, and before-and-after school activities.

Physical activity during the school day (including recess, physical activity for breaks, and physical education) will not be withheld as punishment.

To the extent practicable, Rocketship will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available for students to be active. Rocketship will conduct regular inspections and arrange for necessary repairs throughout the school year.

Physical Education

Pursuant to DC Code § 38-824.02, Rocketship will provide an average of at least 150 minutes of physical education per week to all students in grades K-5. At least 50% of physical education class time will be devoted to actual physical activity, with as much class time as possible spent in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity. Rocketship will meet the D.C. educational standards for physical education.

Rocketship physical education classes will be taught by Enrichment Center Coordinators and/or Rocketship teachers. To maintain a high-quality physical education program, Enrichment Center

Coordinators will receive regular professional development throughout the school year and meet regularly to ensure they are exhibiting network-wide best practices.

1

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. Rocketship will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

As required by Section 602 of the Healthy Schools Act, Rocketship will submit information about the average amount of weekly physical education that students receive in each grade to the Office of the State Superintendent of Education by January 15 of each school year.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

As described above, all Rocketship students will receive health education. Rocketship will include in the health education curriculum a minimum of 12 of the following essential topics on physical activity: the physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity; how physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight; how physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process; how an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease; health-related fitness: cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition; differences between physical activity, exercise and fitness; phases of an exercise session: warm up, workout and cool down; overcoming barriers to physical activity; decreasing sedentary activities, such as TV watching; opportunities for physical activity in the community; preventing injury during physical activity; weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia and sunburn while being physically active; how much physical activity is enough, that is, determining frequency, intensity, time and type of physical activity; developing an individualized physical activity and fitness plan; monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan; dangers of using performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids; social influences on physical activity, including media, family, peers and culture; how to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness; how to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity; how to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity.

Recess

All Rocketship schools will provide 20-30 minutes per day for recess to supplement, not substitute, physical education class. (This number may be adjusted on early dismissal or late arrival days.) Schools will have appropriate hand-washing/hand-sanitizing mechanisms for students who have recess prior to lunch.

Rocketship will offer outdoor recess when the weather is feasible for outdoor play. Schools may conduct indoor recess when the temperature (inclusive of wind chill) is below freezing, during days when the air quality is at “code red” or “code orange,” during storms with lightning or thunder, during rainstorms, or at the direction of the Principal or Business Operations Manager based on best judgment of safety conditions. In the event that Rocketship must conduct indoor recess, teachers and staff will promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable.

Physical activities during recess will be supervised by Rocketship staff. Schools may also choose to organize structured games or activities during recess to increase student participation in physical activity.

Launch

All Rocketship schools incorporate physical activity at the beginning of the school day during a schoolwide assembly called "Launch." School Leaders will provide an opportunity for an all-school coordinated exercise (i.e. dancing or stretching) before instruction commences. Launch is a way to instill in students the importance and joy of incorporating physical activity into their daily lives.

Physical Activity Breaks

Rocketship recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Students will be offered periodic opportunities to be active or stretch throughout the school day.

Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

Rocketship will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting. Rocketship will coordinate and integrate initiatives related to physical activity, nutrition, and other wellness components outside of health and physical education courses. Rocketship teachers will be encouraged to coordinate content across curricular areas that promote student health (i.e. teaching nutrition concepts in Mathematics).

All school-sponsored events will adhere to this wellness policy.

Active Transport

Rocketship will support active transport to and from school, such as walking or biking. Rocketship will encourage this behavior by engaging in six or more of the activities below; including but not limited to: designate safe or preferred routes to school; promote activities such as participation in International Walk to School Week, National Walk and Bike to School Week; secure storage facilities for bicycles and helmets (e.g., shed, cage, fenced area); instruction on walking/bicycling safety provided to students; promote safe routes program to students, staff, and parents via newsletters, websites, local newspaper; use crossing guards; use crosswalks on streets leading to schools; use walking school buses; document the number of children walking or biking to and from school; create and distribute maps of the school environment.

III. Community Partnerships

Rocketship will develop relationships with community partners (i.e. universities, hospitals, local businesses and organizations) in support of the implementation of this wellness policy. Rocketship will evaluate all community partnerships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the policy.

Health Promotion and Engagement

Rocketship will promote the benefits of and approaches to healthy eating and physical activity to students' families and the greater community. Families will be invited and encouraged to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

Rocketship will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity. When feasible, Rocketship will offer professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase their knowledge on how to integrate academics and health.

IV. Wellness Committee

Rocketship schools will convene a representative wellness committee that meets at least once per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of this LSWP. This committee may be a part of the School Site Council or other established Parent/Teacher council, provided that all requirements of this LSWP are met.

Wellness committee membership may include (to the extent possible) but shall not be limited to: parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program; physical education teachers; health education teachers; school health professionals (e.g., health education teachers, school health services staff; and mental health and social services staff (e.g., school counselors, psychologists, social workers); school administrators; health professionals; school board members; and the general public. To the extent possible, the wellness committee will reflect the diversity of the community.

Rocketship Public Schools's Vice President of Schools, or his/her designee, will facilitate development and updates to the LSWP, and will ensure each school's compliance with the policy. Furthermore, each school Principal will designate a school wellness policy coordinator, who will ensure compliance with this policy.

V. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement Implementation Plan

Rocketship will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan will include information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where and when; as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.

Recordkeeping

Rocketship's centralized network support team will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy. Documentation maintained will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public;
- Documentation of efforts to review and update the Local Schools Wellness Policy; including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods used to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate;
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements;
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the local school wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the Local School Wellness Policy has been made available to the public.

Annual Notification of Policy

Rocketship 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. Rocketship will make this information available via school websites and/or network-wide communications. Rocketship will provide as much information as possible about the school nutrition environment.

Triennial Progress Assessments

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

- The extent to which schools in the Rocketship network are in compliance with the wellness policy;
- The extent to which Rocketship'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 Rocketship's wellness policy.

The Vice President of Schools, in collaboration with individual schools, will monitor schools' compliance with this wellness policy. Rocketship will actively notify families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revisions and Updates to the LSWP

Rocketship will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual School Health Index and triennial assessments and/or as Rocketship 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. The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.

Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communication

Rocketship is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. Rocketship will actively communicate ways in which representatives of the school-based wellness committee and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for that school. Rocketship 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. Rocketship will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the 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 the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. Rocketship will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the Rocketship network and individual schools are communicating important school information with parents.

Rocketship will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. Rocketship will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#) (PDF), (AD-3027) found online at: [How to File a Complaint](#), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. fax: 202-690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Approved by the Rocketship Education, D.C., Public Charter School, Inc. Board of Trustees 5/25/2016

Revised: 9/30/2021