

Zion Lutheran School Wellness Policy

Zion Lutheran School, Litchfield, Illinois

Adopted: July 2026

Reviewed/Revised:

I. Purpose and Commitment

Zion Lutheran School recognizes that student wellness, proper nutrition, regular physical activity, emotional well-being, and a safe school environment support student learning and healthy development. As a Lutheran school, Zion also recognizes that caring for the body and mind is part of our Christian stewardship and our desire to serve God and others faithfully.

The purpose of this Wellness Policy is to establish goals and procedures that promote student health, support academic success, encourage lifelong healthy habits, and comply with applicable requirements of the Illinois State Board of Education, the United States Department of Agriculture, and all federal, state, and local laws governing school nutrition and wellness programs.

This policy applies to all students, staff, school-sponsored activities, food and beverages sold or provided to students during the school day, and wellness-related practices at Zion Lutheran School.

II. Wellness Leadership

The Principal, or the Principal's designee, shall serve as the Wellness Policy Coordinator and shall have the authority and responsibility to ensure that Zion Lutheran School implements and complies with this policy.

The Wellness Policy Coordinator shall:

1. Oversee implementation of the Wellness Policy.
2. Maintain documentation related to policy compliance.
3. Coordinate the review and update of the policy.
4. Lead the triennial assessment process.
5. Provide public notice of the policy, policy updates, and assessment results.
6. Report wellness policy progress to the Board of Education or appropriate school leadership.

III. Public Involvement

Zion Lutheran School will permit parents, students, school food service representatives, teachers, school health professionals, school administrators, Board of Education members, congregation representatives, and members of the school community to participate in the development, implementation, review, and update of this Wellness Policy.

Opportunities for involvement may include:

1. Wellness committee meetings.
2. Parent or school surveys.
3. Invitations in newsletters, school emails, bulletin announcements, or on the school website.
4. Feedback opportunities during the annual policy review.
5. Input from faculty, staff, and students.

The Wellness Policy Coordinator shall maintain documentation of public involvement efforts.

IV. Nutrition Education Goals

Zion Lutheran School will provide age-appropriate nutrition education as part of its instructional program and school culture. Nutrition education may be included in health, science, physical education, classroom instruction, chapel or devotion applications related to stewardship, and other appropriate school activities.

Zion Lutheran School will strive to:

1. Teach students the importance of balanced nutrition, hydration, physical activity, rest, and healthy decision-making.
2. Encourage students to understand how healthy habits support learning, growth, and service to others.
3. Integrate nutrition education into classroom instruction when appropriate.
4. Provide consistent wellness messages throughout the school environment.
5. Encourage students to practice healthy choices in the cafeteria, classroom, playground, and at school activities.
6. Support families by sharing wellness-related information through newsletters, handbooks, school communication, or family resources.

V. Nutrition Promotion Goals

Zion Lutheran School will promote healthy food and beverage choices throughout the school day.

The school will strive to:

1. Encourage fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and low-fat or fat-free dairy options.
2. Promote water as the primary beverage for hydration.
3. Encourage students to try a variety of healthy foods.
4. Use positive, age-appropriate messages to encourage healthy eating.
5. Support wellness through classroom activities, school announcements, health lessons, and family communication.
6. Encourage food choices that respect student allergies, dietary needs, cultural needs, and religious considerations.
7. When practical, connect nutrition promotion to hands-on learning opportunities such as gardening, agriculture, science lessons, or food-related service projects.

VI. School Meals

Any reimbursable meals served through the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, or any other applicable federal child nutrition program shall meet or exceed current USDA nutrition standards and meal pattern requirements.

Zion Lutheran School will:

1. Serve school meals that comply with current federal and state nutrition regulations.
2. Provide students access to clean, safe drinking water during the school day and during meal service as required.
3. Provide a clean, safe, and pleasant eating environment.
4. Provide students a reasonable amount of time to eat meals.
5. Encourage respectful behavior during meals.
6. Protect the confidentiality of students who receive free or reduced-price meals.
7. Ensure that food service staff meet applicable hiring, training, food safety, and professional standards.
8. Follow applicable food safety and sanitation requirements.
9. Make reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities or special dietary needs as required by law and program guidance.
10. Consider food preferences, including cultural, religious, and ethical preferences, when feasible and consistent with meal pattern requirements.

VII. Competitive Foods and Beverages Sold to Students

All foods and beverages sold to students on the school campus during the school day shall meet USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards and applicable Illinois requirements.

For purposes of this policy, the school day begins at midnight before the official school day and continues until 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. The school campus includes all areas of school property that are accessible to students during the school day.

This requirement applies to, but is not limited to:

1. A la carte foods and beverages.
2. School stores.
3. Vending machines.
4. Snack carts.
5. Classroom or school sales.
6. Food-based fundraisers.
7. Any other venue where foods or beverages are sold to students during the school day.

Zion Lutheran School will use available USDA, ISBE, or approved Smart Snacks tools to determine whether food and beverage items meet applicable standards.

VIII. Fundraisers

Fundraising activities that involve the sale of food or beverages to students during the school day must comply with USDA Smart Snacks standards and applicable Illinois rules.

Because Zion Lutheran School serves students in preschool through eighth grade, non-compliant food or beverage fundraising exemptions during the school day shall not be used for students in grades preschool through eight.

Allowable fundraising activities include:

1. Non-food fundraisers.
2. Food or beverage fundraisers that meet Smart Snacks standards.
3. Fundraisers held outside the school day.
4. Fundraisers held off campus.
5. Fundraisers involving foods intended for consumption at home and not during the school day, when approved by school administration.

All school fundraisers must be approved in advance by the Principal or Board of Education.

IX. Foods and Beverages Provided but Not Sold

Zion Lutheran School recognizes that foods and beverages may be provided to students at no charge during classroom celebrations, birthday treats, rewards, special events, or other school activities. The school will establish local standards for these items to support student wellness, safety, and allergy awareness.

Zion Lutheran School will:

1. Encourage non-food celebrations and rewards when appropriate.
2. Encourage healthy food options when food is provided.
3. Discourage the frequent use of candy, sugary beverages, or highly processed foods as classroom rewards.
4. Encourage parents and staff to check with the classroom teacher before bringing food for a class.
5. Require consideration of student allergies and medical needs.
6. Require that food served to groups of students be handled safely and hygienically.
7. All the Principal or teacher to limit or prohibit certain foods when necessary for student safety, allergy concerns, or wellness purposes.

Teachers and staff are encouraged to use non-food rewards such as praise, privileges, stickers, special classroom jobs, extra reading time, or other positive incentives.

X. Food and Beverage Marketing

Food and beverage marketing on the school campus during the school day shall be limited to items that meet USDA Smart Snacks standards.

Marketing includes, but is not limited to:

1. Posters.
2. Signs.
3. Menu boards.
4. Flyers.
5. Vending machine displays.
6. Beverage coolers.
7. Cups or containers.
8. Equipment, scoreboards, or other school property used for advertising.

This restriction applies during the school day and shall be considered when entering into contracts, accepting donated materials, or displaying promotional materials.

XI. Physical Activity Goals

Zion Lutheran School recognizes the importance of regular physical activity for student health, learning, attention, and emotional well-being.

The school will strive to:

1. Provide students with regular opportunities for physical activity during the school day.
2. Provide physical education instruction consistent with school curriculum goals and applicable Illinois learning expectations.
3. Provide recess or active play opportunities for elementary students as appropriate.
4. Encourage movement breaks during classroom instruction when helpful for learning.
5. Encourage safe, inclusive physical activity for students of all ability levels.
6. Provide equipment and space for safe physical activity when available.
7. Encourage participation in school athletics, outdoor play, and other age-appropriate movement opportunities.
8. Avoid using physical activity as punishment.
9. Avoid withholding recess or physical activity as a routine disciplinary consequence, except when necessary for safety, supervision, or an individualized student need.

XII. Physical Education

Physical education at Zion Lutheran School will be designed to help students develop physical skills, fitness, teamwork, sportsmanship, respect for others, and an understanding of lifelong health.

Physical education instruction shall strive to:

1. Be age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate.
2. Promote moderate to vigorous physical activity.
3. Teach movement skills, cooperation, and safe participation.
4. Encourage lifelong fitness and healthy habits.
5. Include modifications or accommodations for students with disabilities, medical needs, or temporary restrictions when appropriate.
6. Reinforce Christian character, including respect, self-control, encouragement, humility, and care for others.

XIII. Other School-Based Wellness Activities

Zion Lutheran School will support student wellness through a safe, caring, Christ-centered school environment.

The school will strive to:

1. Promote positive relationships among students, staff, and families.
2. Support social, emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being.
3. Encourage proper handwashing and hygiene.
4. Promote adequate rest, hydration, and healthy routines.
5. Provide health-related communication to families when appropriate.
6. Maintain a safe and clean school environment.
7. Encourage staff to model healthy behaviors.
8. Support wellness through chapel, devotions, service opportunities, classroom instruction, and school activities.
9. Maintain procedures for student health needs, allergies, medication, emergency care, and communicable illness as described in school handbooks and health policies.

XIV. Food Safety, Allergies, and Special Dietary Needs

Zion Lutheran School will follow applicable food safety and sanitation standards.

The school will:

1. Follow proper food handling, storage, preparation, and cleaning procedures.
2. Require food service staff to complete applicable training.
3. Maintain procedures for responding to food allergies and student medical needs.
4. Communicate allergy-related restrictions to staff and families when necessary.
5. Require parents or guardians to provide appropriate documentation for special dietary needs or meal modifications when required.
6. Work with families, food service staff, and health professionals to support students with documented dietary restrictions or allergies.
7. Maintain confidentiality of student health information.

XV. Unused Food Sharing Plan

Zion Lutheran School will maintain a plan for sharing unused food in a manner that focuses on students in need and complies with applicable federal, state, and local food safety and sanitation requirements.

The school may establish a share table or other approved food-sharing procedure for appropriate unopened or unused items.

The food sharing plan shall:

1. Be supervised by school staff.
2. Allow only items that are safe and appropriate for sharing.
3. Follow all food safety and temperature-control requirements.
4. Prioritize students in need.
5. Prevent the sharing of unsafe, opened, partially consumed, or contaminated food.
6. Consider student allergy concerns.
7. Consult local health department guidance when needed.
8. Comply with applicable requirements of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act and all related federal, state, and local regulations.

Examples of items that may be considered for sharing, when safe and permitted, include unopened packaged items, whole fruit with an intact peel or skin, unopened milk or juice maintained at proper temperature, and other foods approved by school food service personnel.

XVI. Staff Wellness

Zion Lutheran School values the wellness of its faculty and staff and recognizes that healthy staff members are better able to serve students and families.

The school may support staff wellness by:

1. Encouraging healthy food and beverage choices.
2. Encouraging physical activity.
3. Promoting a positive and supportive work environment.
4. Providing wellness information when appropriate.
5. Encouraging staff to model healthy behaviors for students.

XVII. Communication with Families

Zion Lutheran School will communicate wellness expectations and procedures to families through appropriate means, which may include:

1. The school handbook.
2. The school website.
3. The school News Note.
4. Email communication.
5. Registration materials.
6. Classroom communication.
7. Parent meetings or school events.

Families are encouraged to support student wellness by providing healthy snacks and lunches, encouraging physical activity, promoting adequate sleep, and communicating student health or dietary needs to the school.

XVIII. Monitoring and Implementation

The Wellness Policy Coordinator shall monitor implementation of this policy throughout the school year.

Monitoring may include:

1. Reviewing school meals and snacks for compliance.
2. Reviewing fundraiser requests.
3. Reviewing classroom celebration practices.
4. Reviewing physical activity opportunities.
5. Gathering feedback from staff, students, and families.
6. Reporting progress to school leadership.
7. Maintaining wellness-related documentation.

The Principal or designee shall address concerns related to policy compliance and may develop procedures to support implementation.

XIX. Public Notification and Reporting

Zion Lutheran School will make the Wellness Policy available to the public.

The school will provide annual public notification of:

1. The current Wellness Policy.
2. Any updates to the policy.
3. Opportunities for public involvement.
4. The most recent triennial assessment, when available.

Public notification may occur through the school website, school office, newsletter, email, registration materials, or other appropriate communication methods.

XX. Triennial Assessment

At least once every three years, Zion Lutheran School will conduct an assessment of this Wellness Policy.

The triennial assessment shall determine:

1. The extent to which Zion Lutheran School complies with the Wellness Policy.
2. The extent to which the Wellness Policy compares to model wellness policies.
3. Progress made in attaining the goals of the Wellness Policy.

The results of the triennial assessment shall be made available to the public. Zion Lutheran School may use ISBE tools, USDA tools, CDC tools, or a locally developed assessment document that meets required standards.

XXI. Recordkeeping

Zion Lutheran School shall maintain records necessary to document compliance with this Wellness Policy.

Records may include:

1. A copy of the current Wellness Policy.
2. Documentation of policy reviews and updates.
3. Documentation of public involvement.
4. Documentation of annual public notification.
5. The most recent triennial assessment.
6. Records of food and beverage compliance when applicable.
7. Fundraiser approvals and related documentation.
8. Wellness committee meeting notes or attendance records.
9. Food sharing plan procedures.
10. Any additional documentation required by ISBE, USDA, or applicable law.

XXII. Review and Revision

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the Principal or designee and updated as needed. Revisions may be recommended based on changes in law, ISBE or USDA guidance, school needs, triennial assessment results, or input from the school community.

Final approval of this policy and major revisions shall be made by Zion Lutheran School's Board of Education.

XXIII. Nondiscrimination

Zion Lutheran School will administer school nutrition and wellness practices in a manner consistent with applicable civil rights and nondiscrimination requirements. No student shall be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any school nutrition or wellness program on the basis of any category protected by applicable law.

XXIV. Policy Approval

Approved by: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Reviewed by: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____