

Youth Villages School Wellness Policy

Preamble:

Youth Villages' value states "kid's needs come first always." This value applies to the physical well being of the children in our care which includes providing youth with nutritional meals, an abundance of physical activities during and after school hours as well as providing them with nutritional and physical activity.

Youth Villages recognizes that children need healthy foods and opportunities to be physically active in order to grow, learn and thrive. Youth Villages is committed to providing an environment that promotes children's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.

Youth Villages "Wellness Committee" is comprised of staff from Education, Food Service, Nursing, Counseling, Performance Improvement, Recreation, Residential and a Licensed Dietitian. This committee is responsible for developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing nutrition and physical activity practices for the youth in our care.

Opportunities for nutrition education are provided and promoted.

Opportunities for physical activity are provided and promoted as an ongoing component of the school week as well as outside the parameters of the school day.

Foods and beverages served meet the recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans and USDA requirements.

Youth Villages provides the youth in our care with a variety of nutritious and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of the children. Youth Villages provides a clean, safe and pleasant environment during mealtimes and provides adequate time for the youth to eat.

Youth Villages is an active participant in the USDA's School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program.

Component 1: Nutrition Education

Youth receive nutrition education that is interactive and teaches the skills they need to develop healthy eating behaviors.

Youth Villages' education curriculum standards and guidelines include nutritional education.

Nutrition Education (cont.)

Artwork in the cafeteria is dedicated to nutrition education and meals served consistently include fruits, vegetables, whole grain products and low-fat dairy products.

Nutrition education is incorporated into Youth Villages' school curriculum in the health class and other classes as determined by need and individual education plans.

Food Service staff will receive the appropriate training in "Food Safety" as required.

Component 2: Physical Activity

Youth in our residential programs will receive a minimum total of 60 minutes of physical activity per day during and after school hours as well as on the weekends.

Youth participate in a variety of physical activities after school hours such as football, softball, basketball, swimming, volleyball, rock climbing, yoga, group fitness, volleyball, cheerleading, dance, therapeutic walks, Runner's Club, Therapeutic Drumming, campus clean-up and special seasonal activities such as summer games and canoeing.

Component 3: Nutrition Standards

Menus as well as special diets are prepared by Youth Villages' Dietitian in conjunction with the physicians and nursing staff.

Fruits, vegetables, and low-fat milk are served on a daily basis. Grain and bread requirements are also provided.

A Food Preference Survey will be conducted with the youth during school hours. Occasionally, a Youth Villages food service vendor hosts a taste-testing lunch for youth and staff. This provides an opportunity to sample a new selection of foods that can be added to our menus to continue providing appealing food choices. Due to the global pandemic, the taste testing opportunity has been placed on hold for the time being.

Youth Villages does not provide or offer foods and beverages in "a la carte" setting, vending machines, snack bars, school stores, fund raising activities or concession stands.

Component 4: Other School-Based Activities

As previously stated, Youth Villages provides the children in our care with a variety of nutritious and appealing foods that meet the health and nutritional needs of the children. We provide a clean, safe, and pleasant environment during mealtimes and provide an adequate amount of time for youth to eat and enjoy their meal.

Youth Villages strictly prohibits the use of food as a punishment.

According to safety standards, Youth Villages will not deny a youth participation in recreation or other physical activities as a form of discipline or punishment.

Youth Villages does not conduct school fund raising activities.

Youth Villages' staff eat meals with the youth during all mealtimes. Staff receive the same meal as youth which encourages the youth to eat their meal as well.

Healthy snacks are provided for youth twice during the day. Snacks are provided after school as well as a bedtime snack.

Youth Villages encourages staff to stay fit and healthy by providing them with the opportunity to join Weight Watchers as well as a "Staying Fit & Loving It" campaign which is held every year in conjunction with our annual employee conference. Youth Villages staff also participates in after hours athletics such as softball, basketball, and pedometer challenges. Youth Villages' staff are also encouraged to participate with our youth during their daily recreation time.