

Willow Creek Academy Wellness Policy

The Willow Creek Academy Board of Directors recognizes the opportunity and the responsibility to create a culture of health within our community that fosters lifelong healthy habits, an appreciation and understanding of the natural world, physical movement, and access to the outdoors. The board recognizes that a healthy diet and regular physical activity are connected to a student's ability to learn effectively, achieve high standards in school and thrive.

Wellness at Willow Creek Academy is defined as follows:

MEALS PROGRAM

Through our meals program, The Conscious Kitchen (TCK), food and beverages served on campus shall:

- Meet or exceed the nutritional standards required by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- Strive to meet standards of fresh, local, organic, seasonal, non-GMO, and be scratch-cooked on site by a Head Chef and kitchen staff
- Not be prepackaged, highly processed, or prepared in any way that creates adverse health outcomes and contributes to unnecessary waste
- Be economically sustainable and served in age appropriate portions
- Be prepared in ways that will appeal to students, retain nutritive quality and foster lifelong healthful eating habits
- Be served in a pleasant atmosphere with adequate time to eat to promote the enjoyment of meals, good manners and student respect for others and themselves
- All school eating areas shall contain free safe drinking water sources and facilities for hand washing
- Students shall participate in zero waste by recycling, reusing and composting

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The Board recognizes the positive benefits of physical activity for student health and academic achievement. Recognizing that physical education is a crucial and integral part of a child's education, WCA will provide opportunities to ensure that students engage in healthful levels of vigorous physical activity to promote and develop the student's physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being.

MENTAL HEALTH

The Board recognizes that counseling and mental health services are essential to the overall health of its students and greater community and will ensure access to anyone in need. In addition to counseling services, programs such as Mindful Mornings shall be offered to the entire community to promote healthy stress

management, cultivate empathy, improve attention span, assist with emotional regulation and contribute to an overall sense of wellbeing.

The Board supports sensible homework policies that are adaptive for students at each grade level and minimize the stress that can sometimes be associated with homework. Likewise, the Board recognizes that students transitioning from fifth grade to middle school may experience stress associated with this transition, and the Board supports a block schedule that minimizes transitions between classes, as well as additional Academic Workshop time for study skills development.

The Board recognizes that middle school can present social and academic challenges, particularly as students prepare for their transition to high school. The Board supports partnerships with mental health services providers and community based organizations that support students with these challenges and help them to prepare for high school.

NUTRITION & OUTDOOR EDUCATION

The Board recognizes that experiential learning activities assist students to make connections between diet, health, and the environment, and are critical to student understanding of personal wellness within a larger context of environmental health. Willow Creek plays a crucial role in educating students on environmental issues and preparing them to be the stewards of their natural resources. Through the use of experiential learning opportunities in our school gardens, cooking classes, and creek projects, students can better understand where their food comes from and how the food choices they and their families make impact the health of the larger social and natural communities within which they live.

The Board recognizes that the Willow Creek gardens and creek are community spaces that have long-term impacts on community health and offer an unparalleled atmosphere for students to experience planting, harvesting, preparation, tasting foods, integrated with nutrition education and core curriculum and articulated with state standards.

TEACHER & STAFF WELLNESS

The Board recognizes that the wellbeing of school employees is essential and critical to the success of Willow Creek Academy.

The Board agrees to support school employee wellness in the areas of self-care, movement, healthy eating, stress management and mindfulness, and will provide at least two enrichment opportunities in a given school year to all employees to ensure the ongoing personal, professional and spiritual wellbeing of all school employees.