



VIRTUS ACADEMY

CONSECTATIO EXCELLENTIAE

2407 Pisgah Road
Florence, SC 29501
Phone: 843-799-4032
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VASC Wellness Policy- 2025-2026

Virtus Academy recognizes that student wellness and proper nutrition are related to students' physical well-being, growth, development, and readiness to learn. The school is committed to providing a school environment that promotes student wellness, proper nutrition, nutrition education, and regular physical activity as part of the total learning experience. In a healthy school environment, students will learn about and participate in positive dietary and lifestyle practices.

Food and Beverage Availability

Virtus Academy is committed to serving healthy meals to students, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams trans fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children 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 special dietary needs.

Virtus Academy participates in USDA child nutrition programs through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and is committed to offering school meals 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

Students in grades Kindergarten through 12th grade will be provided a minimum of 20 minutes to consume lunch after they have received their food.

Virtus Academy will not use foods or beverages as rewards for academic performance or good behavior. Additionally, Virtus Academy will not withhold food or beverages as punishment.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day and throughout the school campus. Virtus Academy will make drinking water and 5 oz. drinking cups available where school meals are served during mealtimes. Water-refill stations are located in both lower and upper school



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buildings for students to refill cups or water jugs throughout the day.

Competitive foods and beverages

Virtus Academy is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on school campuses during the school day support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold outside of the school meal programs (e.g., “competitive” foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. See administrative rule EFE-R,

All foods that meet the competitive food standards may be sold at fundraisers on the school campus during school hours. The number of fundraisers exempt from the nutrition requirements will be determined by the South Carolina State Board of Education.

District Goals for Health and Wellness

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, teachers, parents/legal guardians, students, and the community.

Nutrition education

Virtus Academy will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students. Virtus will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that fulfills the following criteria:

- fosters the adoption and maintenance of healthy eating behaviors such as acquiring skills for reading food labels and menu planning
- is part of a sequential comprehensive standards-based health education program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health
- 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



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gardens, Farm to School programs, and other school foods and nutrition-related community services

See policy IHAM, Health Education, for more information.

Physical activity

Children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive school physical activity program which includes quality physical education as the foundation; physical activity before, during, and after school; staff involvement; and family and community engagement. The school may promote opportunities for physical activity via in-school announcements, newsletters, posters, etc. Virtus Academy is committed to providing these opportunities and will ensure that these varied physical activity opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education.

Virtus Academy encourages the use of physical activity as a reward when feasible. Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks, or physical education) will not be withheld as punishment for any reason. This does not include participation on sports teams or with other sports-related after-school activities, nor does it include participation on sports teams with specific academic requirements.

Physical education

Virtus Academy will provide students with physical education using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits and incorporate essential health education concepts. The curriculum will support the essential components of physical education. See policy IHAE, Physical Education, for more information.

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

Goals

Virtus Academy will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues, and physical activity facilities. Virtus



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Academy will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition, and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary and work towards the same set of goals and objectives, promoting student well-being, optimal development, and strong educational outcomes. Virtus Academy will coordinate content across curricular areas that promote student health, such as teaching nutrition concepts in mathematics, with consultation provided by the school's curriculum specialists.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state, or association recognition for efforts or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of the wellness policy, including, but not limited to, ensuring the involvement of the district wellness committee.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy guidelines. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

Community partnerships goal

Virtus Academy will develop and enhance relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, SNAP-Ed providers, and coordinators) in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Community health promotion and family engagement

Virtus Academy will promote to parents/caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating, water consumption, and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts through health tips and water and movement competitions. Virtus Academy will use electronic mechanisms (e.g., email, Parent Square, or displaying notices on the school's website), as well as non-electronic mechanisms, (e.g., newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents), to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

Water goal

Virtus Academy will increase its water consumption from approximately 15,000 bottles of water to approximately 20,000 bottles by the end of the 2025-26 school year according to each water refill station.



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Physical activity goal

Virtus Academy will promote physical activity through sports, physical education classes, and clubs. We will increase the sports and clubs promoting physical activity from 0 to at least 4.

District Wellness Committee/Coordinated District Health Advisory Council

Virtus Academy convenes a wellness committee that meets at least once per year to establish district wellness goals for and to oversee school health and safety policies and programs including development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy. Wellness committee members will include, to the extent possible, parents/legal guardians, students, representatives of district nutrition services, physical education teachers, school nurse, Federal, the school board, school administrators, and the general public. The designated officer for ensuring district compliance with the wellness policy and oversight of the committee will be the Federal Programs Coordinator.

Annually, Virtus Academy will notify the public about the content and implementation of the wellness policy and share any updates to the policy. Virtus Academy will also publicize the name and contact information of the Federal Programs Coordinator with information on how the public can become involved with the wellness committee or obtain additional information on the wellness policy. The information for this annual review can be gathered through and utilized in Virtus Academy's strategic planning process.

Every three years, Virtus Academy will assess its compliance with the policy, how it compares to model wellness policies published by state and federal agencies, and the school's progress in attaining the goals of the policy. The results of this assessment will be made available to the public to showcase the wellness efforts being made by the school and how it is in compliance with the wellness policy. Following this assessment, Virtus Academy will update or modify the policy as necessary and share these changes with the public.

Recordkeeping

Virtus Academy will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy. Documentation maintained by the school 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 policy, including an indication of



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who is involved in the update and methods the district uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the district wellness committee (e.g., copy of meeting notice posted on the district website)

■ documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements ■ the most recent assessment on the implementation of the wellness policy ■ documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the wellness policy has been made available to the public

Food and Beverage Marketing

Virtus Academy 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. The school 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 school property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information the school is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of Virtus Academy 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 the school's wellness 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. These standards do not apply to marketing that occurs at events outside of school hours such as after-school sporting events or any other events, including school fundraisers.

Contracts for goods or services that include a food and beverage marketing component executed after June 30, 2017, must conform to federal nutrition standards. No exceptions will be granted.

Food and beverage marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in schools. Food and beverage marketing includes any oral, written or graphic 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 that is displayed



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during the school day, such as marquees, message boards, scoreboards, or backboards (Note: Immediate replacement of these items is not required; however, Virtus Academy will replace or update scoreboards or other durable equipment when existing contracts are up for renewal or to the extent that is financially possible over time so that items are in compliance with this policy.)

■ corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans, and other foodservice equipment; as well as on posters, book covers, pupil assignment books, or school supplies displayed, distributed, offered, or sold by the district

■ 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

Legal References:

A. Federal Law:

1. Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, Pub. L. No. 111-296, 124 Stat. 3183.

B. Federal Regulations:

1. National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Nutrition Standards for All Goods Sold in School, 7 C.F.R. Parts 210 and 220 (2016).
2. Local School Wellness Policy Implementation, 7 C.F.R. Parts 210 and 220 (2016).

C. S.C. Code, 1976, as amended:

1. Section 59-10-10, et seq. - Physical education, school health services, and nutritional standards.
2. Section 59-10-330 - Coordinated School Health Advisory Council (CSHAC).
3. Section 59-10-350 - Length of elementary school lunch period.
4. Section 59-32-30(A)(1)-(3) - Comprehensive health education program; guidelines and restrictions.

D. State Board of Education Regulations:

1. R43-168 - Nutrition standards for elementary (K-5) school food service meals and competitive foods.
2. R43-238 - Health education requirements.

E. State Board of Education Academic Standards:

1. 2014 SC Academic Standards for Physical Education.
2. 2009 Academic Standards for Health and Safety Education.
3. 2015 SC "Smart Snacks" and Exempt Fundraisers Memorandum.

F. Other References:

1. National Standards for Physical Education, SHAPE (Society of Health and Physical Educators)
2. National Health Education Standards, Joint Committee on National Health Education Standards.
3. USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
4. USDA Guide to Smart Snacks in School (2016).
5. USDA Professional Standards for State and Local School Nutrition Programs (2015).