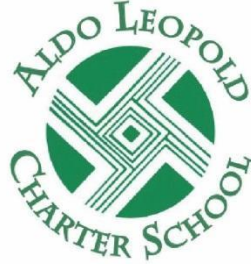


Aldo Leopold Charter School Wellness Policy



Adapted from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation Model Wellness Policy

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Preamble | 2 |
| Section 1: An Overview of the School Health Advisory Committee | 3 |
| Section 2: Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement | 5 |
| Section 3: Nutrition | 7 |
| Section 4: Physical Activity and Physical Education | 12 |
| Section 5: Health Education | 15 |
| Section 6: Social and Emotional Well-Being | 17 |

Section 7: Other Practices that Promote Student and Staff
Wellness.....21

Non-Discrimination
Statement.....
.....25

Aldo Leopold Charter School Wellness Policy

Preamble

Aldo Leopold Charter School is committed to the optimal development of every student. The school believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, and social success, we need to create health-promoting learning environments in every setting throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components—**good nutrition** and **physical activity** before, during, and after the school day—are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism, and better performance on cognitive tasks.^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods, including fruits, vegetables, and dairy

¹Endnotes

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products, is associated with lower grades among students.^{8,9,10} In addition, students who are physically active through high-quality physical education courses, “active commuting”

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⁹Bradley, B, Green, AC. Do Health and Education Agencies in the United States Share Responsibility for Academic Achievement and Health? A Review of 25 years of Evidence About the Relationship of Adolescents' Academic Achievement and Health Behaviors, *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2013; 52(5):523–532.

Meyers AF, Sampson AE, Weitzman M, Rogers BL, Kayne H. School breakfast program and school performance. *American Journal of Diseases of Children*. 1989;143(10):1234–1239.

Murphy JM. Breakfast and learning: an updated review. *Current Nutrition & Food Science*. 2007; 3:3–36.

Murphy JM, Pagano ME, Nachmani J, Sperling P, Kane S, Kleinman RE. The relationship of school breakfast to psychosocial and academic functioning: Cross-sectional and longitudinal observations in an inner-city school sample. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*. 1998;152(9):899–907.

Pollitt E, Mathews R. Breakfast and cognition: an integrative summary. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. 1998; 67(4), 804S–813S.

Rampersaud GC, Pereira MA, Girard BL, Adams J, Metzler JD. Breakfast habits, nutritional status, body weight, and academic performance in children and adolescents. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. 2005;105(5):743–760, quiz 761–762.

Taras, H. Nutrition and student performance at school. *Journal of School Health*. 2005;75(6):199–213.

MacLellan D, Taylor J, Wood K. Food intake and academic performance among adolescents. *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*. 2008;69(3):141–144.

Neumark-Sztainer D, Story M, Dixon LB, Resnick MD, Blum RW. Correlates of inadequate consumption of dairy products among adolescents. *Journal of Nutrition Education*. 1997;29(1):12–20.

Neumark-Sztainer D, Story M, Resnick MD, Blum RW. Correlates of inadequate fruit and vegetable consumption among adolescents. *Preventive Medicine*. 1996;25(5):497–505.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *The association between school-based physical activity, including physical education, and academic performance*. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, 2010.

Singh A, Uijtdewilligne L, Twisk J, van Mechelen W, Chinapaw M. *Physical activity and performance at school: A systematic review of the literature including a methodological quality assessment*. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*, 2012; 166(1):49-55.

Haapala E, Poikkeus A-M, Kukkonen-Harjula K, Tompuri T, Lintu N, Väistö J, Leppänen P, Laaksonen D, Lindi V, Lakka T. *Association of physical activity and sedentary behavior with academic skills – A follow-up study among primary school children*. *PLoS ONE*, 2014; 9(9): e107031.

Hillman C, Pontifex M, Castelli D, Khan N, Raine L, Scudder M, Drollette E, Moore R, Wu C-T, Kamijo K. *Effects of the FITKids randomized control trial on executive control and brain function*. *Pediatrics* 2014; 134(4): e1063-1071.

¹⁵ Change Lab Solutions. (2014). *District Policy Restricting the Advertising of Food and Beverages Not Permitted to be Sold on School Grounds*. Retrieved from <http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/district-policy-school-food-ads>.

to and from school, recess and physical activity breaks, and extracurricular activities, do better academically.^{11,12,13,14}

In addition to its commitment to healthy personal behaviors, ALCS recognizes the need to create a sustainable model for food distribution and preparation, so efforts to minimize food packaging and transport are key to creating a viable food model for our school family. In the same way, “sustainable physical activities” that build community, provide knowledge about the body in its life stages, and reify the importance of play are essential as well. In this way, we view *student health* as foundational for *community health*; one cannot exist without the other.

This policy outlines our school’s approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- ALCS 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;
- our students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- our students have opportunities to be physically active before, during, and after school;
- the school family promotes healthy nutrition, physical activity, and daily habits that promote student wellness;
- school staff are themselves 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 ALCS in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and

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- ALCS establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of our Wellness Policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to the ALCS family, including students, staff, parents, and community associates.

It is worth mentioning here that our Wellness Policy must necessarily be a “living document,” subject to revision when new research and community infrastructure (for example, a new school building, new recreational opportunities, and safer routes to school) offer opportunities for us to improve our community’s health.

Above all, this document is science-based, so that our conclusions are challenged by research conducted both within our school and in the larger world.

Section 1: An Overview of the School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC)

Committee Role and Membership

ALCS will convene a representative School Health Advisory Committee (hereto referred to as SHAC) that meets at least five times per academic year to establish goals for school health and to review health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation, and periodic review and update of our ALCS Wellness Policy.

The SHAC membership will represent both middle and high schools and include, to the extent possible: parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program; physical education teachers; health education teachers; school health professionals; school social services staff; school administrators; ALCS Governing Council members; and community members.

Leadership

The school director will convene SHAC and facilitate development of and updates to the Wellness Policy, and will ensure the middle and high school’s compliance with the policy.

Below the members of the 2020-21 SHAC are listed, along with their contact information and a brief notation of their role of their “constituency” on the committee.

| Name | Title | Email address | Role |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Hannah Wecks | School Director | hwecks@aldocs.org | Administrator |
| Mark Gomez | School Nurse | mgomez@aldocs.org | RN |
| Alex Tager | Member, ALCS Governing Council | atager@aldocs.org | Health educator & program director |
| Garrett Ferguson | ALCS faculty | gferguson@aldocs.org | MS staff |
| Zach Tecca | ALCS faculty, Chair | ztecca@aldocs.org | Chair |
| Heidi Pendleton | Parent, Food Service Manager | heidi@guadalupeмонтessori.org | Parent of ALCS HS & MS students; NSLP agent |

The school director will designate a SHAC chair, who will endeavor to ensure compliance with the Wellness Policy.

Section 2: Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

ALCS has developed and will maintain a plan to manage and coordinate the execution of our Wellness Policy.

This Wellness Policy and SHAC progress reports can be found at www.aldocs.org.

Recordkeeping

ALCS will retain records of compliance with the Wellness Policy in the director's office. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- the written Wellness Policy;

- documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements, including (1) efforts to actively solicit SHAC membership from the required stakeholder groups; and (2) these groups' participation in the periodic review and update of the wellness policy;
- documentation of annual SHAC progress reports;
- documentation of the triennial assessment of the Wellness Policy;
- documentation demonstrating compliance with public notification requirements, including: (1) methods by which the Wellness Policy, annual progress reports, and triennial assessments are made available to the public; and (2) efforts to actively notify families about the availability of the Wellness Policy.

Annual Progress Reports

ALCS will compile and publish an annual report to share basic information about the Wellness Policy and to report on the progress of the school in meeting wellness goals. This annual report will be published during the summer. This report will include, but is not limited to:

- the website address for the Wellness Policy and how the public can access a copy of the policy;
- a description of the school's progress in meeting Wellness Policy goals;
- a summary of the school's events or activities related to Wellness Policy goals and prescriptions;
- the name, position, title, and contact information of the designated SHAC members; and
- information on how individuals and the public can get involved with SHAC.

The annual report will be made available online in English; members of the school family for whom English is not a primary language may request assistance in translating the policy by contacting the school at 575.538.2547.

ALCS will actively notify members of the school family regarding the availability of the annual report.

For each of the content-specific components listed in Sections 3-5 of this policy, SHAC will establish and monitor goals for ALCS that are specific and appropriate for both middle and high school.

- When feasible, SHAC will track, analyze, and report on any correlations between improvements in health-promoting environments with educational outcomes, such as absenteeism, disciplinary referrals, test scores, average grades, BMI, or psycho-social measures such as self-reported "connectedness," health measures such as consumption of whole grains, fruits, or vegetables through the Lunch Bunch program, or other

school-climate measures. ALCS will endeavor to collaborate with local research institutions and universities in their collection and assessment of data.

- In addition, ALCS will—when feasible—track and annually report other related information, such as findings from food safety inspections, aggregate participation in school meals programs, income reported from competitive food sales, fundraising revenues, and other such information.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, ALCS will evaluate compliance with the Wellness Policy to assess its pertinence and effectiveness; in particular, it will examine:

- the extent to which the ALCS family is in compliance with the Wellness Policy;
- the extent to which ALCS's Wellness Policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy; and
- progress made in attaining the goals of the Wellness Policy.

The SHAC chair will be responsible for managing the triennial assessment.

SHAC will monitor the school's compliance with this wellness policy.

In addition, the committee will actively notify the school family regarding the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revising and Updating the Policy

SHAC will update or modify the Wellness Policy based on the results of the annual progress reports and triennial assessments, as school priorities change and as community needs change; as new health science and technology emerge; and as new federal or state guidance or standards are issued. It may be that, as the school meets its wellness goals, SHAC may set more ambitious goals.

Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications

ALCS is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the Wellness Policy. ALCS will actively communicate ways in which representatives of SHAC and others can participate in the periodic review and update of the Wellness Policy through a variety of appropriate means. ALCS 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. Using a communications style that is culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, ALCS 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, and

information mailings to parents, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of and updates to the Wellness Policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. The version of the Wellness Policy available to the public at the school website will be updated annually, at a minimum.

Section 3: Nutrition

School Meals

ALCS is committed to serving healthy meals to our students and staff, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains; food served will be moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, low in refined sugar, and offer zero grams of *trans* fat per serving (per nutrition label or manufacturer's specification) and will meet the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal program aims to improve the diet and health of students and staff, 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.

ALCS participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). ALCS is committed to offering school meals through the NSLP that:

- are accessible to all students;
- are appealing and attractive to students and staff;
- 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 five of the following Smarter Lunchroom techniques:
 - whole fruit options are displayed in common locations that are regularly available to students;
 - 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 staff and parent volunteer servers have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal;
 - student surveys and taste-testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor, and promotional ideas;
 - Students are encouraged to dine outdoors, but have indoor dining space available when necessary.
 - student artwork is displayed in the service and dining areas; and
 - daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options.

In addition, menus will be posted in the school newsletter and by the school kitchen; Per USDA Lunch Program standards or requirements, ALCS nutrition program undergoes administrative review. The Lunch program will make reasonable efforts to accommodate students and staff with special dietary needs and predilections, including those who follow a vegetarian or vegan diet.

Other guiding principles for the ALCS nutrition program include the following:

- Students will be allowed at least 30 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal.
- Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
- In the middle school, lunch will follow a period of activity to better support learning and healthy eating.
- Participation in federal child-nutrition programs will be promoted among students and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their children's school.
- ALCS will implement the following Farm-to-School activities:
 - o locally grown products are incorporated into the school meal program; Aldo annually applies to the New Mexico Grown Grant program.
 - o messages about agriculture and nutrition are reinforced throughout the learning environment;
 - o ALCS maintains a school garden onsite;
 - o the school hosts field trips to local farms; and
 - o ALCS utilizes promotions or special events, such as tastings, that highlight locally grown products.

Water

In order to promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day. In addition, students will be allowed to bring and carry water bottles (filled with water only) with them throughout the day. All water sources and containers will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene standards.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

ALCS is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus during the school day support healthy eating. At a minimum, Lunch choices will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Smart Snacks standards 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.

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered at school will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, including food provided through:

1. *celebrations and parties.* ALCS will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas;
2. *classroom snacks brought by parents.* ALCS will provide to parents a list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards; and
3. *rewards and incentives.* ALCS will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a list of alternative ways to reward children. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward or withheld 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. ALCS will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas.

- ALCS should consider implementing a program that will use only non-food fundraisers and encourage fundraising events promoting physical activity (such as walk-a-thons, Jump Rope for Heart, and fun runs).
- Any food-related fundraising will sell only foods and beverages that meet or exceed the Smart Snacks nutrition standards.

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 the school building. 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, parents, students, and the community.

ALCS will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all our students, as well as encourage participation in the Lunch school meal program. This promotion will occur through:

- implementing evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques using Smarter Lunchroom techniques; and
- promoting foods and beverages that meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Nutrition Education

ALCS aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- is part of not only health education classes but is also integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, 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 (through physical activity);
- links with Lunch Bunch nutrition promotion activities, school gardens, Farm-to-School programs, other food programs, and nutrition-related community services;
- teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and
- includes nutrition education training for school staff.

In the middle school and high school, nutrition education will be offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based health education curriculum that meets state and national standards. Health education teachers will provide opportunities for students to practice or rehearse the skills taught through the health-education curricula.

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

ALCS will include in its health-education curriculum the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- exploring the relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention;
- obtaining food guidance from MyPlate;
- reading and using USDA food 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 (especially saturated fat) and cholesterol and that do not contain *trans* fat;
- choosing foods and beverages with little added sugar;
- eating more calcium-rich foods;

- preparing healthy meals and snacks;
- understanding the risks of unhealthy weight-control practices;
- accepting body-size differences;
- assuring food safety;
- understanding the importance of water consumption;
- understanding the importance of eating breakfast;
- making healthy choices when eating at restaurants;
- understanding eating disorders;
- reviewing “Dietary Guidelines for Americans”;
- reducing sodium intake;
- exploring social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers, and culture;
- learning how to find valid information or services related to nutrition and dietary behavior;
- developing a plan for and tracking progress toward a personal goal to eat healthfully;
- resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior; and
- influencing, supporting, or advocating for others’ healthy dietary behavior.

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

ALCS is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity 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. Knowing that these efforts will very likely be weakened if students are subjected to advertising at school that contains messages inconsistent with the health information that the school imparts, the school will make every effort to keep food advertising out of our building. In rare instances when flyers for community events that include promotions for food sales are permitted in the building, only those foods and beverages consistent with the Wellness Policy can be advertised.

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Food advertising and marketing is defined as an oral, written, or graphic statement made for the purpose of promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the 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 or on the school website or newsletter;
- 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, school uniforms, or school supplies; and
- free product samples, taste tests, or coupons for a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product.

Section 4: Physical Activity and Physical Education

ALCS staff believe that children and adolescents should participate in 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive, school-based physical-activity program that includes physical education classes, backpacking trips, community orientation activities, YCC crew labor, recess (for middle schoolers), walking and bicycling to school, other classroom-based physical activity, and extracurricular activities. ALCS is committed to providing and encouraging these opportunities, keeping in mind that varied physical opportunities are an addition to and not merely a substitute for physical education class time. Staff have been investigating the *Let's Move! Active Schools* program (www.letsmoveschools.org) in order to successfully incorporate these many forms of physical activities into students' daily lives.

ALCS stands by the common-sense policy of all viable wellness policies: Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, physical activity breaks, or physical education) will not be withheld as punishment for any reason. (At the same time, students who play for interscholastic sports teams may be placed on probation as a result of academic performance or other behavior, thereby limiting their ability to participate in organized league competition; we will encourage students on such probation to continue pursuing physical activity until their probation is terminated.) To support the aforementioned policy, ALCS will provide school staff with a list of ideas for alternative ways to provide appropriate consequences for students.

To the extent practicable, ALCS will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students and staff to provide opportunities for them to remain active. School personnel will conduct necessary inspections and repairs to all equipment. In addition, staff will inventory physical-activity equipment and supplies and, when necessary, work with community partners to provide sufficient and varied equipment.

Physical Education

ALCS 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, as well as incorporate essential health-education concepts into their daily lives.

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

All students in grade 6 will receive physical education for at least 60-89 minutes per week throughout the school year. Students in grades 7 and 8 are required to take the equivalent of one academic year of physical education during each of their years at ALMS. Students in grades 9 and 10 are required to take the equivalent of one semester of physical education during their freshman or sophomore years at ALHS; likewise, students in grades 11 and 12 are required to take the equivalent of one semester of physical education during their junior or senior years.

The ALCS physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments (via the Presidential Youth Fitness Program or other appropriate assessment tool) and will use criterion-based reporting for each student. The staff is committed to keeping students moderately to vigorously active for at least 50% of class time during most or all physical education class sessions.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

ALCS will include in the health education curriculum 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—that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- Differences between physical activity, exercise, and fitness
- Phases of an exercise session—that is, 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

- Determining healthy training parameters with regards to frequency, intensity, length, 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

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies, and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside their students whenever feasible.

Before- and After-School Activities

ALCS offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity before and after the school day through a variety of methods. ALCS will encourage students to be physically active before and after school by encouraging students to participate in organized middle- and high-school sports leagues, providing play equipment (basketballs, kickballs, and other athletic gear) for play before and after school, and by sponsoring extracurricular events that offer physical activity.

“Active Commuting”

ALCS supports active commuting to and from school, such as walking, biking, or skateboarding. In its new setting in Fall 2020, the school will encourage this behavior by engaging in *six or more* of the activities listed below, including but not limited to:

- Designation of safe or preferred routes to school
- Promotional activities such as participation in International Walk-to-School Week and 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
- Promotion of a safe routes program to students, staff, and parents via newsletters, websites, and the local newspaper
- Crosswalks on streets leading to schools

- Use of “walking school buses”
- Documentation of number of children walking and biking to and from school
- Creation and distribution of maps of the school neighborhood (e.g., sidewalks, crosswalks, roads, pathways, bike racks, etc.)

Section 5: Health Education

Health Education Focused on Life Skills

Several years ago, Aldo Leopold High School instituted its first “Health Fair,” a day of instruction and experiential activity for students to learn about mental health, coping strategies for stress, sexually transmitted diseases, healthy nutrition, healthy relationships, and a host of other health-education topics. Staff and students saw a need for more comprehensive health education, so within a few years of such humble beginnings, the school implemented a much-needed comprehensive Health course, which is now required of all high-school students. In our student handbook, we list among our 27 credits required for graduation one credit for Health (0.5 credit earned as a freshman and 0.5 as junior). With the creation of an Aldo Leopold Middle School six years ago, staff added a middle-school Health class, which is traditionally delivered to 7th-grade students.

We currently offer students a planned, sequential health-education curriculum that addresses the physical, mental, emotional and social dimensions of health. The curriculum is aligned to the health education content standards as set forth in NM PED Standards and Benchmarks. (High school standards are available at <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Health-Education-Standards-9-12.pdf>, while middle school standards are available at <https://webnew.ped.state.nm.us/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Health-Education-Standards-5-8.pdf>.) Due to the length of each document and their ready availability, neither document is included here in full, but the seven content standards for high-school health education are listed below as a set of guiding principles for our program:

- 1: Students will comprehend concepts related to health promotion and disease prevention.
- 2: Students will demonstrate the ability to access valid health information and health-promoting products and services.
- 3: Students will demonstrate the ability to practice health-enhancing behaviors and reduce health risks.
- 4: Students will analyze the influence of culture, media, technology and other factors on health.
- 5: Students will demonstrate the ability to use interpersonal communication skills to enhance health.

- 6: Students will demonstrate the ability to use goal-setting and decision-making skills to enhance health.
- 7: Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for personal, family, peer and community health.

Like all New Mexico schools, we have implemented an “opt-out” policy that ensures that parents have the ability to request their child be exempted from health-education curriculum components that focus on sexuality standards, with a clear process of exemption outlined therein. Our school’s *Student and Parent Handbook*, updated and distributed annually and available online, states our policy as follows:

“It is not the intent of Aldo Leopold Charter School to promote sexual activity, or to supplant a student’s or parents’ values. A parent or legal guardian may revoke his or her student’s participation in this program by completing and submitting the school’s ‘Safer Sex Opt-Out’ form.

In addition, per state requirements, ALCS provides instruction about HIV and related issues found in the curriculum for required health education. Accordingly, we support classroom HIV education with non-discriminatory policy, here stated in the *ALCS Student and Parent Handbook*:

“Current medical research indicates that persons with AIDS who are not sexually involved with others and whose blood does not come into contact with others do not pose a health risk. Medically, it appears that the risk of infection can be controlled and largely eliminated in normal school social situations. Because Aldo Leopold Charter School endeavors to educate the community about the real (and dispel the imaginary) threats of this disease, it has adopted the following points of view toward AIDS/HIV:

- Persons with AIDS or HIV infection are legally and morally protected from discrimination. Aldo Leopold Charter School will strive to protect the rights and health of any individual, student, teacher, or other staff who is known to have AIDS, while at the same time ensuring others in the school community are also protected.
- Aldo Leopold Charter School will educate its students, teachers, and community about the disease and the methods of its transmission and help students achieve a rational perspective of its actual risks, and educate students in how to protect themselves from this disease.

Accordingly, the school makes condoms available to students free of charge, following the policy outlined in the *Student and Parent Handbook*:

“Upon a direct request from students themselves, the school will provide condoms to high school students. These will be made available directly to a student by the school Guidance Counselor. The school Guidance Counselor will follow legal expectations

surrounding confidentiality. A parent or legal guardian may revoke his or her minor student’s participation in this program by completing and submitting the school’s ‘Condom Availability Opt-Out’ form.”

First-Aid Training for All High-School Students

Each August, all high-school students participate in a Backpacking Base Camp, a three-day training in backcountry skills that includes a day of first-aid instruction and practice. In addition, we last year implemented a one-hour first-aid training in an outdoors setting for our eighth graders. In our high-school health classes, we have recently implemented the newly required lifesaving skills training for hands-on (compression only) cardiopulmonary resuscitation, including instruction in recognizing the signs of a heart attack, training on the use of an automated external defibrillator, and guided practice in performing the Heimlich maneuver for choking victims.

See Appendix A for high-school and middle-school health syllabi.

Section 6: Social and Emotional Well-Being

While Aldo Leopold Charter School prides itself on the rigorous experiential-learning program that it offers its students, the school recognizes that much of our work is for naught when our students’ social and emotional well-being is not nurtured. At best, classroom and field instruction is inefficient when students struggle socially and emotionally; at worst, instruction is *impossible* when students must focus on overwhelming barriers—like anxiety, disruptions in family routines, overwhelming behavioral risks, and other challenges to their mental health. When the school family works together with community members, we can cultivate strategies that support our students’ lifelong mental health.

ALCS employs licensed professionals—a school counselor, a school psychologist, a special-education director, a school nurse, and a school social worker—to assess and identify risk factors for our students’ social and emotional well-being. Naturally, all teaching staff receive training and guidance in identifying (and in many cases addressing) mental-health issues, whereby we encourage a team approach to addressing challenges for our students.

Of course, none of our well-intentioned interventions will succeed unless we provide, in the words of the state’s Public Education Department, “a positive, supportive environment in which students are able to request assistance when needed.” Such an environment requires that school personnel value student health more than any punitive response to “bad behavior.” Moreover, students must be certain that, no matter what staff *say*, our responses to them are humane, genuine, and caring.

Consistent with national trends, our students have in the past decade more and more frequently manifested self-harming behaviors, and in light of such trends, the possibility of a student suicide haunts us all. As a result, we this year instituted what will become an annual training in identifying and responding to suicidal ideation. Our Safe School Plan more thoroughly addresses our response to self-harm and suicidal ideation, but we include here a list of school personnel who comprise our “Crisis Intervention and Crisis Recovery Team,” as well as a summary of our institutional response

to suicidal ideation. It may serve as an example of our formal response to other challenges to student social and emotional well-being:

| Name | Title | Email address | Role/Expertise |
|----------------|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Hannah Wecks | School Director | hwecks@aldocs.org | Administrator |
| Fiona Bailey | ALCS Assistant Director | fbaily@aldocs.org | Middle-school advisory expertise |
| Mark Gomez | ALCS faculty (high school) | mgomez@aldocs.org | Registered Nurse |
| Cheryl Head | ALCS School Counselor | chead@aldocs.org | “Point person” for any mental-health crisis |
| Zachary Tecca | ALCS High School Health Teacher | ztecca@aldocs.org | Secondary Emotional Support & Response |
| Nancy Stephens | ALCS Social Worker | nstephens@aldocs.org | Social Work |
| Melissa Frost | Business Manager | mfrost@aldocs.org | Public relations expertise |

The school nurse, working with SHAC and the Crisis Intervention Team, has outlined the following program to address suicidal ideation:

- ALCS school personnel will be provided annually a 90-minute training in how to respond to a student who is showing signs of suicidal ideation.
- The following principles will guide our staff:
 - All staff, including custodians, bus drivers, and community mentors, must be aware of the school’s Suicide Prevention Plan, which outlines the appropriate steps to take when a student exhibits suicidal behaviors or ideation. Besides being aware of the Suicide Prevention Plan, all staff are trained in how to identify student behaviors that suggest a potential for self-harm. Staff are to report all concerns to the director, the school counselor, the school educational psychologist, the school nurse, or any other member of the Crisis Intervention Team.

- o At least two members of the Crisis Intervention Team must meet to respond to any concerns staff members raise. If a meeting with other members of the team is deemed necessary after consultation among team members, then the team meets, with the goal of providing immediate treatment for the student.
- o Administrators will make sure that all staff know who among them serves on the ALCS Crisis Intervention Team by distributing a list of team members and their contact information.
- o The Crisis Intervention Team will create (and annually revise) a community referral network to get help quickly.
- o Staff must be aware, well in advance, of the existing agencies and services in the community to contact following a student suicide threat or attempt. Community agencies include the Silver City Police Department, the Grant County Sheriff's Department, Gila Regional Medical Center's Emergency Department, behavioral health agencies, psychiatric facilities, and other emergency first-responder agencies.
- o If a person demonstrates any suicidal tendencies (verbal or otherwise), staff must keep that person under close observation until a trained mental-health professional arrives.
- o Staff will remain with the person threatening suicide until help is obtained.

Once a student or staff member who has received assistance or treatment for a suicidal crisis returns to school, the Crisis Recovery Team puts in place a plan to support and reintegrate that person into the school community. In addition, any students or staff who provided support during the suicidal crises should have counseling made available to them.

Following a completed suicide of a student or staff member, ALCS staff should refer to the RECOVERY section of this document to guide how best to address the loss to the school community.

School and Community Mental Health

Recently, a student athlete who had left ALCS for a local public school was overheard poking fun at Aldo Leopold Charter School teammates. "We can get together with those Aldo runners after practice," she said, "and *talk about our feelings.*"

In her satire is actually some reassuring accuracy: The staff and students at our school do spend significant instructional time "talking about our feelings," if by that we mean that we participate in restorative circles, group problem-solving, Socratic Seminars, creating and revising School Norms, and exploring mental-health issues in relation to our holistic personal health and community health.

ALCS mental health programs and instructions focus on breaking down health and social barriers to students' learning with emphasis on meeting each student's individual health needs. ALCS supports each student's quest to become a fully functioning and resilient adult. Behavioral-health programs encourage and support links between youth, families,

schools, communities, and private and government agencies to create and maintain an environment in which all students can learn and thrive. ALCS emphasizes the following:

- Creating an atmosphere in which the psychological, social and emotional aspects of students are integrated into all parts of student life and wellness;
- Providing the structure and support to allow each student to live a socially and emotionally fulfilling life;
- Increasing awareness of students' social and emotional needs;
- Decreasing stigma around mental health issues;
- Linking school systems with community systems to improve support, resources, advocacy, and assessment;
- Creating school-linked programs that are family-friendly, accessible, integrated and comprehensive; and
- Supporting local strategies that create healthy schools.

Eliminating the Stigma of Mental Illness

In many ways, our country is not remarkably sophisticated when it comes to understanding mental illness. And to be fair, we can't claim that our science has explored neurology, endocrinology, and human behavior in sufficient depth to draw many widely-held conclusions. Still, though much misunderstanding about mental health persists, we can de-stigmatize those many members of our community who have been diagnosed with or confront mental illness. State guidelines recommend the following "Approaches to De-stigmatizing Mental Illness" (reworded somewhat by our Risk Management Committee):

- Broaden acceptance by talking about behavioral health issues, so those who are in need receive the right support and services early on.
- Encourage students to seek out help; they need not fear discrimination, shame, or blame (at least in their school community).
- Decrease negative attitudes that surround mental health problems by providing accurate information about mental health.
- Encourage young people to support their friends who are living with mental health issues.
- Foster recognition in school personnel that many children have mental health issues which are real, painful, and sometimes severe.
- Increase public awareness about the importance of protecting and nurturing the mental and behavioral health of young people.

Section 7: Other Practices that Promote Student and Staff Wellness

ALCS integrates wellness activities across the entire school setting, coordinating and integrating initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition, and other wellness components so that all efforts work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development, and strong educational outcomes. In consultation with one another, classroom teachers are encouraged to coordinate content

across curricular areas in order to promote student health (for example, teaching nutrition concepts in mathematics class).

Consistent with the principles of our wellness policy, ALCS will strive to obtain federal, state, or association recognition for its efforts to promote healthy lifestyles, seeking grants and other funding opportunities to make our school environment healthier.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to our Wellness Policy. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity opportunities.

Training Staff to Recognize and Report Child Abuse and Neglect, as Well as to Report Substance Abuse

Per New Mexico statutes, all ALCS staff receive training during their first year of service for child abuse and neglect detection and reporting, including training for the identification of sexual abuse and assault. In addition, all faculty receive an annual review of the same.

ALCS adheres to substance abuse reporting as well. Per state statutes, “A school employee who knows or in good faith suspects any student of using or abusing alcohol or drugs shall report such use or abuse.” The statute also protects any school employee “who in good faith reports any known or suspected instances of alcohol or drug use or abuse” from “civil damages as a result of such report or his efforts to enforce any school policies or regulations regarding drug or alcohol use or abuse.”

Providing for Students with Special Health Care Needs

Working with student-support personnel (counselors, psychologists, as well as trained faculty), the school nurse identifies students with special health needs, including those students whose health concerns are significant enough to merit an Individualized Health Plan or an IEP 504 Plan. Generally, the school’s multi-disciplinary student-support team identifies students whose health issues affect school attendance; in addition, since our students are not infrequently off-campus on multiday trips, the team will identify students with health challenges that might be impacted by prolonged time away from familiar health-maintenance routines. Staff make every effort to *safely* include students in all activities related to their experiential education.

Earlier in this document we cited our school policy toward students diagnosed with HIV/AIDS. With each passing year, the stigma that once plagued AIDS patients is receding. Nonetheless, old attitudes towards HIV persist, so the school continues to provide education to students and the school family consistent with common sense, scientific findings, as well as with New Mexico statutes. Our instructional program provides students with:

- a definition of HIV and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS);
- the symptoms and current prognosis of HIV and AIDS;
- a clear explanation of how HIV is spread and *not* spread;
- a list of methods that reduce the risks of getting HIV/AIDS, with an opportunity to evaluate each for efficacy;
- a consideration of societal implications resulting from HIV/AIDS;
- a list of local resources for appropriate medical care; and
- modeling exercises to demonstrate refusal skills, to overcome peer pressure, and to make decisions based on evidence and honesty.

Encouraging and Documenting Immunizations

While there exists a not-inconsiderable cohort of ALCS families who eschew immunizations, the school nurse encourages immunization, even as he respects the right for families to exempt members from immunization.

Regarding immunizations, all students at ALCS fall into one of three categories:

- A. They are fully immunized, per the state Department of Health school requirements;
- B. their parents or guardians have filed an approved immunization exemption form, which the school keeps on file;
- C. they or their parents can provide documentation demonstrating that they are in the process of being properly immunized (for example, they have received one in a series of immunizations and are awaiting booster administration at the earliest possible date).

It's worth mentioning here that a student protected under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act will not be prevented from enrolling in school if they are not able to produce immunization records. When possible and ethical, such students will be referred to immunization clinics to maintain both personal and public health.

Providing for Students' Self-Administration of Medication

Working with the school nurse, students with chronic health challenges that require ready access to emergency and health-maintenance medications (for example, insulin, epinephrine, or albuterol) will create a protocol for safely administering needed medications while keeping those medications away from students who might be harmed by misusing them. Such protocols are especially important when students are away from the school building on school-sanctioned trips.

Working with Staff Who Have Special Healthcare Needs

Staff are annually asked to complete a health status report, which is held confidentially by the ALCS school nurse. Per New Mexico statutes, staff members' privacy is protected with regards to health conditions, including HIV/AIDS and mental illness. Staff are asked to share with trip co-leaders any health conditions that could impact a school trip in a significant way.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

Healthy practices at home are powerful persuaders when middle- and high-school students are making decisions about their own healthy behaviors. But other adults in a student's orbit—coaches, religious leaders, youth program directors, and teachers—have a real opportunity to model healthy living for that impressionable adolescent. To that end, Aldo Leopold Charter School encourages its staff to participate in healthy practices. In time, we may create a health-incentive program for staff, but for now, as our staff moves to its new location on the Western New Mexico University campus, ALCS administration is seeking to secure low-cost access to WNMU's fitness center and natatorium.

Per New Mexico statutes, the school ensures an equitable work environment and meets regulations outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act. In addition, it provides affordable, healthy meal options on-campus and offers opportunities for staff to participate with students and other members of the school family in backpacking trips, trail races, and other school-sponsored educational activities.

It's worth mentioning that staff meetings and school gatherings follow a "healthy meeting policy," so that attendees are offered a variety of choices and selections of healthy foods for a variety of dietary needs.

Professional Learning

When feasible, ALCS offers annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school (e.g., increasing the use of kinesthetic teaching approaches or incorporating nutrition lessons into math class). Professional learning will help ALCS staff understand the connections between academics and health, along with ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing school-improvement programs.

Community Partnerships

ALCS will cultivate and enhance its relationships with community partners (hospitals, colleges, local businesses, and local government agencies) to support our Wellness Policy. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated annually to ensure that they are consistent with the Wellness Policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Engagement

Throughout the school year, ALCS will promote to parents and caregivers, families, and the general community the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity.

Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health-promotion efforts.

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U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

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(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

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Program.Intake@usda.gov

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