



Children's Home Association of Illinois

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Kiefer School and Academy for Autism Local Wellness Policy

2026–2029

Preface

Recognizing that children need access to nutritious foods, physical activity, and wellness supports in order to grow, learn, regulate, and thrive, Kiefer School and Academy for Autism are committed to creating learning environments that support student health, well-being, safety, and academic success.

This Local Wellness Policy aligns with:

- The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA)
- USDA Final Rule: Local School Wellness Policy Implementation Under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (2016)
- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- School Breakfast Program (SBP)
- Illinois State Board of Education guidance
- Public Act 102-0359 regarding food sharing plans

Kiefer School and Academy for Autism recognize that wellness is directly connected to student learning, emotional regulation, therapeutic engagement, school attendance, and long-term health outcomes.

I. Wellness Leadership

Kiefer School and Academy for Autism shall maintain a Local Wellness Council responsible for the development, implementation, monitoring, review, and updating of the Local Wellness Policy.

Wellness Policy Leadership

The Vice President of Education and/or designee shall serve as the Wellness Policy Leader and shall be responsible for:

- Ensuring implementation of the Local Wellness Policy
- Coordinating required triennial assessments
- Maintaining required documentation



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- Facilitating stakeholder involvement
- Supporting public communication and posting requirements
- Monitoring policy compliance

Wellness Council Membership

The Wellness Council may include representatives from:

- School administration
- Residential administration
- Food service personnel
- Teachers or classroom staff
- School nurses or health professionals
- Activity coordinators
- Behavior support staff
- Parents/guardians
- Students, when appropriate
- Community members with nutrition or wellness expertise

The Wellness Council shall meet at least annually to review wellness initiatives, implementation efforts, stakeholder feedback, and policy updates.

II. Public Involvement

Kiefer School and Academy for Autism value stakeholder involvement in the development, implementation, review, and updating of the Local Wellness Policy.

The schools shall provide opportunities for participation by:

- Parents and guardians
- Students, when appropriate
- Teachers and school staff
- School administrators
- Food service professionals
- School health professionals
- Community members

Stakeholders may provide input through:



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- Wellness Committee meetings
- School or agency website postings
- Parent and staff communication platforms
- Email communication
- Surveys or feedback opportunities
- Parent/student handbooks

The schools shall maintain documentation of stakeholder involvement and annual review activities.

III. Triennial Assessment and Policy Review

In accordance with federal requirements, Kiefer School and Academy for Autism shall complete a triennial assessment of the Local Wellness Policy at least once every three years.

The triennial assessment shall evaluate:

1. The extent to which the Local Wellness Policy complies with USDA requirements
2. The extent to which the policy aligns with model wellness policies
3. Progress made toward attaining the goals outlined in the policy

The Wellness Policy Leader and Wellness Council shall coordinate the assessment process and involve relevant stakeholders in the review.

The Local Wellness Policy shall be reviewed annually and updated as appropriate to reflect:

- Changes in federal or state regulations
- School wellness priorities
- Student needs
- Stakeholder feedback
- Assessment findings

Documentation maintained shall include:

- Current Local Wellness Policy
- Triennial assessment reports
- Meeting agendas or sign-in sheets
- Policy revision records
- Evidence of public posting
- Documentation of stakeholder notification and participation



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IV. Nutrition Standards for School Meals

Kiefer School and Academy for Autism participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) and are committed to providing nutritionally balanced meals that support student health, academic success, emotional regulation, and overall wellness.

All reimbursable meals served shall comply with current USDA meal pattern requirements and all applicable federal and state regulations.

A. Meal Requirements

School meals shall:

- Meet or exceed USDA nutrition standards for calories, sodium, saturated fat, trans fat, and added sugar
- Include daily offerings of fruits and vegetables representing a variety of colors and nutrient profiles
- Ensure grain products served are whole-grain-rich whenever required by USDA regulations
- Offer low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk and approved nutritionally equivalent non-dairy alternatives
- Limit highly processed foods whenever feasible
- Be developmentally appropriate and portioned according to age and student need

B. Meal Environment

Kiefer School and Academy for Autism are committed to providing positive, supportive dining environments.

Meals shall:

- Be served in clean, safe, and orderly settings
- Allow adequate time for students to eat
- Encourage appropriate social interaction and independence
- Support therapeutic and sensory needs when appropriate
- Be supervised by trained staff who model healthy eating behaviors

C. Student Access and Participation

- Students shall be offered breakfast daily through the School Breakfast Program.



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- Students shall have access to school meals without discrimination.
- Meals shall be provided in accordance with program eligibility requirements.
- Students shall be encouraged, but not required, to consume all meal components.

D. Dietary Accommodations

- Special dietary needs supported by physician documentation shall be accommodated in accordance with USDA regulations.
- Food service staff shall collaborate with nursing and administrative personnel to safely implement dietary modifications.
- Meal modifications shall be implemented in a manner that preserves student dignity and confidentiality.

E. Outside Food Restrictions

Due to allergy management, safety concerns, and therapeutic consistency:

- Students are generally not permitted to bring food or beverages from home during the school day unless approved by administration or nursing staff.
- Food sharing among students is prohibited.
- Staff shall support allergy-aware and medically safe environments.

V. Competitive Foods and Smart Snacks Standards

Kiefer School and Academy for Autism comply with USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards for all foods and beverages sold to students during the school day.

A. Definition of Competitive Foods

Competitive foods include foods or beverages sold to students outside the reimbursable meal program, including:

- À la carte items
- Vending machine products
- School stores
- Snack sales
- Fundraisers occurring during the school day



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B. Smart Snacks Compliance

All competitive foods sold during the school day must:

- Meet USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards
- Meet standards for calories, sodium, fat, and sugar
- Include whole grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy, or protein foods as primary ingredients when applicable
- Be approved by administration prior to sale

C. Current Practice

At this time, Kiefer School and Academy for Autism do not operate vending machines, school stores, or routine food-based fundraisers during the school day.

Should such activities be implemented in the future, all offerings shall comply with Smart Snacks standards.

D. Fundraising Activities

- Fundraisers conducted during the school day shall comply with Smart Snacks standards.
- Non-food fundraisers are strongly encouraged.
- Any exempted fundraiser requests, if applicable, shall be reviewed and approved by school administration in accordance with Illinois requirements.

Examples of non-food fundraisers may include:

- School spirit activities
- Walk-a-thons or activity events
- Raffles or prize drawings
- Community service projects
- Craft or student artwork sales

E. Monitoring and Oversight

The Wellness Policy Leader and administration shall monitor compliance with Smart Snacks standards and maintain required documentation for administrative review purposes.



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VI. Foods and Beverages Provided but Not Sold

Kiefer School and Academy for Autism recognize that foods and beverages provided to students but not sold — including classroom celebrations, instructional activities, snacks, incentives, and rewards — influence lifelong wellness habits.

All foods and beverages provided during the school day shall support student health, safety, and therapeutic consistency.

A. Nutrition Standards

Foods and beverages provided but not sold shall:

- Emphasize fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and water
- Limit foods high in added sugars, sodium, and saturated fats
- Avoid sugar-sweetened beverages whenever possible
- Align as closely as possible with Smart Snacks standards

B. Classroom Celebrations and Activities

Classroom celebrations and activities shall:

- Emphasize healthy food choices and non-food activities
- Encourage alternatives such as games, crafts, physical activity, music, or experiential learning
- Consider student allergies, medical needs, and sensory concerns

C. Rewards and Incentives

- Food shall not be used as the primary reward for academic performance or behavior.
- Non-food incentives are strongly encouraged.
- Food shall never be withheld as punishment or discipline.

Examples of non-food incentives include:

- Positive praise and recognition
- Extra activity opportunities
- Certificates or classroom privileges
- Leadership opportunities
- Choice-based activities



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D. Snacks

When snacks are provided:

- Selections shall consider nutritional value, timing of school meals, student age, and therapeutic needs
- Snacks should primarily include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lower-sugar options
- Staff shall consider documented dietary restrictions and allergies

E. Allergy and Safety Considerations

- Food sharing among students is prohibited.
- Outside food is not permitted without approval.
- Staff shall follow school allergy management procedures.

F. Oversight

The Wellness Policy Leader and administration are responsible for monitoring compliance with these standards.

VII. Nutrition Education

Kiefer School and Academy for Autism are committed to providing developmentally appropriate, evidence-based nutrition education that supports healthy decision-making and lifelong wellness habits.

Nutrition Education Goals

The schools shall:

- Integrate nutrition education into classroom instruction and daily routines when appropriate
- Promote understanding of balanced nutrition and healthy food choices
- Encourage student participation in meal-related decision-making when developmentally appropriate
- Support the development of independent living and self-care skills related to nutrition when appropriate
- Reinforce wellness concepts through positive staff modeling



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Curriculum and Instruction

Nutrition education may occur through:

- Health instruction
- Classroom integration
- Independent living instruction
- Daily living skill instruction
- Social-emotional learning activities
- Interactive learning activities

Resources may include:

- USDA MyPlate resources
- Team Nutrition materials
- Evidence-based health education resources
- Developmentally appropriate visual supports

VIII. Nutrition Promotion

Kiefer School and Academy for Autism shall promote healthy eating behaviors and positive dining experiences throughout the school environment.

Nutrition Promotion Goals

The schools shall:

- Encourage healthy food choices through positive reinforcement and modeling
- Promote participation in school meal programs
- Provide positive and respectful dining environments
- Utilize visual wellness messaging and nutrition supports when appropriate
- Encourage hydration and water access throughout the school day
- Consider student voice and preferences when feasible

Nutrition Promotion Strategies

Strategies may include:

- Student choice menus when feasible



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- Positive dining environments
- Visual wellness messaging
- Staff modeling healthy behaviors
- Nutrition-related classroom activities
- Encouragement of balanced meal participation

Cafeteria and Meal Communication

Meal menus and nutrition information may be shared through:

- Parent handbooks
- School or agency website
- Family communication systems
- Printed materials upon request

IX. Food and Beverage Marketing

Kiefer School and Academy for Autism permit marketing and advertising only for foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards.

Marketing includes, but is not limited to:

- Posters and signage
- Educational materials
- Fundraising materials
- Digital media
- Menu boards
- Promotional displays

The schools shall prohibit the marketing of foods and beverages that do not meet Smart Snacks standards during the school day.

This policy applies to locations accessible to students during the school day.

X. Physical Activity

Kiefer School and Academy for Autism recognize that physical activity supports physical health, emotional regulation, learning readiness, and student well-being.



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Physical Activity Goals

The schools shall:

- Provide regular opportunities for physical activity during the school day
- Encourage movement and active participation throughout the instructional environment
- Adapt physical activity opportunities to meet individual student needs and IEP considerations
- Promote lifelong physical wellness habits

Physical Education and Structured Activity

Kiefer School and Academy for Autism provides:

- Physical education and/or structured physical activity opportunities at least four times weekly
- Modified physical activities based on student needs and IEPs
- Adaptive opportunities when appropriate

Residential students may also participate in structured physical activity programming aligned with therapeutic goals.

Additional Opportunities for Physical Activity

Additional opportunities may include:

- Sensory movement breaks
- Structured recreation
- Outdoor activities
- Classroom movement activities
- Physical regulation activities
- Community-based recreation opportunities

XI. Other School-Based Wellness Activities

Kiefer School and Academy for Autism support whole-child wellness through trauma-informed, therapeutic, and relationship-based practices.



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Wellness Goals

The schools shall:

- Promote emotional safety and supportive learning environments
- Integrate trauma-informed practices into school programming
- Support student mental health and emotional regulation
- Encourage positive staff-student relationships
- Promote healthy sleep, hygiene, and self-care education when appropriate
- Support staff wellness initiatives when feasible

Examples of school-based wellness activities may include:

- Social-emotional learning
- Sensory supports and regulation activities
- Therapeutic recreation
- Counseling and clinical supports
- Wellness awareness activities
- Family engagement opportunities

XII. Unused Food Sharing Plan

In accordance with Public Act 102-0359, Kiefer School and Academy for Autism shall maintain a food sharing plan focused on reducing food waste and supporting students in need.

The schools shall:

- Reduce food waste whenever feasible through production planning and meal forecasting
- Allow eligible unopened food items to be shared or redistributed in accordance with federal, state, and local health regulations
- Follow all applicable sanitation and food safety requirements
- Collaborate with food service personnel to implement safe food-sharing practices

Examples of food sharing or reduction strategies may include:

- Share tables when appropriate
- Redistribution of unopened packaged items
- Donation partnerships when feasible and allowable
- Production planning to minimize waste



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XIII. Public Reporting and Posting

Kiefer School and Academy for Autism shall make the following information publicly available:

- Current Local Wellness Policy
- Most recent triennial assessment
- Progress toward wellness goals
- Policy updates and revisions

Posting methods may include:

- Agency website
- Parent/student handbooks
- Printed copies available upon request
- School communication systems

Stakeholders shall be informed of opportunities to participate in wellness policy review and development activities.

XIV. USDA Final Rule Compliance Crosswalk

USDA Requirement	Policy Section
Wellness leadership	Section I
Public involvement	Sections II & XIII
Triennial assessment	Section III
Nutrition standards for school meals	Section IV
Competitive foods standards	Section V
Foods provided but not sold	Section VI
Nutrition education goals	Section VII
Nutrition promotion goals	Section VIII
Food marketing standards	Section IX
Physical activity goals	Section X
Other school-based wellness activities	Section XI
Unused food sharing plan	Section XII
Public reporting	Section XIII



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XV. Triennial Assessment Summary Narrative

Nutrition Education

Status: Meeting

Kiefer School and Academy for Autism provide developmentally appropriate nutrition education through classroom instruction, independent living activities, and integrated wellness supports. Instruction is adapted to meet students' academic, communication, sensory, and therapeutic needs.

Nutrition Promotion

Status: Meeting

Nutrition promotion occurs through positive meal environments, visual supports, student engagement, healthy snack practices, and staff modeling. Nutritional information is available to families upon request.

Physical Activity

Status: Meeting

Students participate in physical education and structured physical activity opportunities aligned with Illinois requirements and student needs. Residential programming includes physical activities that support physical wellness and emotional regulation.

Other School-Based Wellness Activities

Status: Meeting

Kiefer School and Academy for Autism integrate wellness through trauma-informed practices, therapeutic supports, sensory regulation strategies, coordinated residential-school collaboration, and relationship-based programming.

Policy Compliance and Alignment

Status: Meeting

The Local Wellness Policy was reviewed against USDA requirements, ISBE guidance, and model wellness policy resources. Required components are included and publicly posted in accordance with federal and state expectations.



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XVI. Administrative Review Documentation Checklist

The following documentation shall be maintained for administrative review purposes:

- Current Local Wellness Policy
- Wellness Council membership list
- Meeting notes or sign-in sheets
- Most recent triennial assessment
- Public posting evidence
- Policy update documentation
- Smart Snacks compliance documentation
- Stakeholder communication documentation

Regulatory References

This Local Wellness Policy aligns with:

- Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010
- USDA Final Rule: Local School Wellness Policy Implementation Under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010
- National School Lunch Program regulations
- School Breakfast Program regulations
- Illinois State Board of Education guidance
- Public Act 102-0359