

Rancho San Antonio

Wellness Policy

Recognizing the need for daily implementation of sound nutrition and exercise practices, Rancho San Antonio (RSA) strives to maintain a Wellness Policy to meet all of the local educational agency's requirements, specifically – nutritional education, physical activity, and other school-based activities.

RSA supplements standards-based nutrition curriculum guidelines provided by Aggeler HS with information from food vendors along with companies marketing the food we buy. Our goal is to promote health and lower the risk associated with childhood obesity.

The RSA Wellness Policy implementation meets the regulations and guidelines issued by the Secretary of Agriculture in a measurable manner. The agency appreciates the input from our youth, their families, the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public in the development of this wellness policy. The physical activity and nutritional information go hand in hand.

Staff model healthy physical activity to all the youth in the agency by helping them select a physical activity to add to their daily routines. The agency offers swimming, running, walking, weights, and seasonal sports, among other activities, for daily participation. There are activity times in the afternoon and evenings every day and in the mornings on most non-school days. Part of the activity includes the coach or activity instructor providing nutritional suggestions and monitoring. Specifically, what dietary recommendations are usual for top performance in their sport, especially on game or race days. Also, the youth is informed about the exertion and caloric use of this activity, as opposed to his other daily activities, and the considerations he should give to his choice of snack, as well as meals. This is discussed with and evaluated by the youth's primary dorm staff.

Meal periods include breakfast, lunch and dinner. Each period there is adequate time allotted to ensure time for residents to eat a well-balanced meal. Free water is available at every meal period. The dorm staff eat meals with the youth, modeling healthy eating and drinking behaviors to our boys. Staff are able to encourage good eating habits and suggest they try new things. They are also in a position to point out poor eating habits such as relying on unhealthy snacks to sustain them. Staff are encouraged to enjoy the same food served to the youth and refrain from bringing unhealthy options to the meal table.

In addition, if in the course of a youth's physical the doctor recommends weight loss, the boy and his primary dorm staff design and implement an action plan. Besides monitoring his caloric intake, the youth's action plan also includes specific food studies pertinent to his needs. Typically, vitamin and mineral information regarding their purpose and required daily intake and possible consequences for insufficiencies. If the youth has a food allergy, he would be given information from the doctor and the agency on how best to avoid reactions and complications. Religious preferences and dietary preferences are also discussed with Kitchen Staff and youth.

The youth are given the opportunity to work in the agency kitchen with the cooks. Part of his duties would be to assist in the planning and preparing of meals for the entire campus. In addition, they have

opportunity to help the dorm staff plan and prepare a dorm barbeque in one of the agency's barbeque areas.

Each youth's program includes a life skills class that covers all of the wellness policy components. Best practice plans are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Our classes cover topics such as: How to shop for food, healthful cooking, home illness care, advantages of physical recreation. The Aftercare staff follow-up with the youth to encourage him to incorporate the information into his daily routine, after discharge.

Recognizing the importance of a pleasant environment to maximize the benefits of meals, the cleanliness and safety standards of the LA Health Department, California Department of Education, Nutrition Services Division, and Rancho San Antonio Board of Directors shall be strictly enforced and monitored by the Food Service Director. The Food Service Director has the support of the Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, Residential Director, and Activity Director in maintaining high quality compliance. For example, the Activity Director administers the youths' work program that assists with cleaning the kitchen and dining hall. Additionally, the Activity Director solicits the youths' input and help in decorating the dining hall for the holidays.

Rancho's Director of Training oversees all training compliance including wellness as required by our national accrediting body (CARF), licensing (CCL) and Probation/DCFS. The Residential Director and Training Director, hold monthly meetings with the Unit Supervisors; to ensure the monitoring of the Wellness Program and facilitate the training of staff to implement the Wellness Program by identifying teachable moments.

The RSA Advisory Council augments the LA Board of Health yearly inspection by making annual Building and Safety inspections themselves.