

United Methodist Youth Home, Inc.
Wellness Policy on Physical Activity and Nutrition

03/09/2026

Philosophy: The United Methodist Youth Home, Inc. supports the health and well-being of all residents and students by promoting nutrition and physical activity.

Statement of Purpose: In accordance with federal law, it is the policy of UMYH to provide residents and students access to healthy foods and beverages; provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity; and require that all meals served by UMYH meet or exceed the federal nutritional guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. A coordinated Wellness Committee will maintain and oversee these activities.

UMYH's Wellness Policy is available to youth and their families by means of the student/resident handbook and UMYH's website. The Wellness Policy will be evaluated by the committee every 3 years with an evaluation tool and will notify the public of the results on the UMYH webpage.

I. Wellness Committee

UMYH will encourage students, parents/guardians, staff, health professionals, and other interested community members in developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing agency-wide nutrition and physical activity policies. The Wellness Committee will maintain at the agency to oversee the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Wellness Policy.

- A. In accordance with state and federal law, UMYH will form and maintain a Wellness Committee that includes at least the following:
 - Parents/Guardians as their interest in participation is received
 - Residents/Students on a rotating basis if interested
 - Staff
 - Executive Director
 - Director of Programs
 - Wellness Coordinator
 - Any interested members of the general public
 - Representatives of Interested Community Organizations
- B. The Wellness Committee shall meet at least quarterly to review nutrition and physical activity policies and to develop an action plan for the coming year. The Wellness Committee will also discuss implementation activities and address any barriers and challenges.
- C. The Wellness Policy is updated at least every 3 years or before if needed.
- D. The Wellness Policy is available to youth and their families by means of the student handbook/intake packet and UMYH's website.

II. Nutrition Education

Nutrition topics shall be integrated within programming and taught to all Day Reporting students.

- A. Nutrition education will also be incorporated into the classroom curriculum and through Independent Living through Cognitive Skills group. This will include teaching skills such as, how to read and use food labels, choosing healthy options, and portion control.
- B. Foods of minimal nutritional value, will be discouraged in Independent Living Meal Planning..

III. Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition topics shall be integrated within programming and taught to Day Reporting students.

- A. Foods of minimal nutritional value, including brands and illustrations, shall not be advertised or marketed in the educational setting.
- B. Posters and education material regarding healthy eating, such as the Food Pyramid and What's on your Plate will be in common areas.

IV. Standards for USDA Child Nutrition Programs and Meals

UMYH will provide and promote the National School Lunch Program to ensure that all Day Reporting students have access to healthy foods to support healthier choices.

A. Meal Content

1. Meals served through the National School Lunch will:
 - Be appealing and appetizing to youth
 - Meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements established by the USDA for federally funded programs
 - Meals will include fresh fruits and vegetables on a consistent basis
 - Fresh fruits will be offered in the morning before classes begin.
2. All cooked food will be baked, steamed, or roasted.
3. Preparation methods will be used to decrease excess fat, calorie, and sodium levels in food.
4. Special dietary needs of youth will be considered when planning meals.
5. Proper procurement will be used to use money wisely while also providing USA products.

B. School Meal Participation

1. Day Reporting students will be provided the USDA School Lunch Program at no cost to them or their family regardless of eligibility through the school lunch program .
2. Day Reporting students will be offered a (non reimbursable) healthy morning snack, which may include fresh fruit, before class begins

C. Mealtimes and Scheduling

1. Adequate time will be provided to youth to eat lunch (at least 20 minutes after being served).
2. Meals will be served in clean and pleasant settings.
3. Youth will have convenient access to hand washing or sanitizing stations.
4. Drinking water will be readily available at all times.

D. Professional Development

1. Professional development and training will be provided at the time of employment and annually to staff on proper food handling techniques and healthy cooking practices, along with the procedures that are required for the Department of Education School Lunch program.
2. New employees will be trained at the time of employment and yearly thereafter on Civil Rights that are directly involved in the school lunch program.

V. Nutrition Standards for Competitive and Other Foods and Beverages

- A. United Methodist Youth Home does not have any vending machines available for the youth to purchase food items.

B. Availability

Youth will have free, potable drinking water for consumption available in their program at all times.

C. Celebrations

1. Celebrations will focus on activities with families and peers rather than on food.
2. Incentives are things such as, giving free time, extra time outside, treasure box gifts.
3. Celebrations that include food will be limited when prepared in the programs.
4. When the community donates meals for the programs, UMYH will make every effort to encourage healthy options are added to that meal.
5. Food items that do not meet the guidelines set forth in this document will be given outside of meal times, such as when students are released from school programming at the end of the day.

D. Food as Punishment

1. Staff will not withhold food or drink at mealtimes as punishment.

VI. Physical Activity and Physical Education

- A. UMYH supports the health and well-being of students by promoting physical activity through various recreational activities on campus and in the community.
- B. Day Reporting students are offered physical activity breaks 1-2 times a day. Additionally, UMYH supports physical activity among all youth by providing them with at least 30 of the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity when available.
- C. Staff will not use physical activity (running laps, pushups, etc.) or withhold opportunities for physical activity as punishment.

VII. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

- A. The UMYH organization supports the health and well-being of our students and staff by creating and promoting policy and environmental supports to provide physical activity and healthy eating opportunities.
- B. The UMYH organization will invite community partners to join and support activities that promote student wellness.

VIII. Evaluation

UMYH is committed to enforcing the policies and guidelines included in this document through implementation of the Wellness Policy. UMYH will create an environment that supports opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating behaviors. To ensure continuing progress, UMYH will evaluate implementation efforts and their impact on youth every 3 years.

Nutrition Education Goals

- 1) All students shall receive nutrition education that is age-appropriate and aligned with the curriculum standards and benchmarks established by the State of Indiana.
- 2) Nutrition education posters and other nutrition education information will be displayed in the cafeteria.
- 3) The staff shall be encouraged to model healthy eating as a valuable part of daily life and will eat with the youth during mealtimes.
- 4) Day Reporting students, when time allows, will participate if interested, during the gardening months of April to September.
 - i. They will learn how to plant vegetables and how to care for them.
 - ii. They will assist in harvesting the items from the garden for use in their program.
 - iii. Youth will learn new ways of cooking vegetables and adding fresh herbs when available.

Physical Education Goals

- 1) Students are given opportunities for physical activity during the school day through physical play outside. During inclement weather, students and residents will utilize the Health and Wellness Center on campus for physical activity.
- 2) Recreational programming will provide a variety of activities with an emphasis on developing healthy habits for a lifetime of regular physical activity.
- 3) Recreational programming shall teach cooperation, fair play, and responsible participation.
- 4) Recreational programming shall take into account gender and cultural differences.

Goals to Encourage Healthy Eating

- 1) UMYH will offer lunch to all students, prepared and served in a clean, safe environment, by well-prepared staff who understand food safety.
- 2) Menus will meet the nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and will feature a variety of healthy choices that are tasty, attractive, of excellent quality, and served at the proper temperature.
- 3) UMYH will ensure that students, and staff with documented nutrition-related health problems are provided with appropriate meals, and, if necessary, are referred to appropriate services for medical treatment.

Other School Based Activities

- 1) UMYH shall provide attractive, clean environments in which the students eat.
- 2) Students are discouraged from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal times, unless it is a non-temperature controlled item that is individually packaged and has been placed on the Share Table.
- 3) At any function, healthy food choice options should be available to students and residents.