



Residential Youth Care Inc.

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Wellness Policy

Purpose:

Residential Youth Care Inc. (RYC) recognizes that this organization is in a position to promote healthy lifestyle choices by youth that can affect their lifelong wellness. Therefore Residential Youth Care, Inc. will provide environments that promote and protect youth's health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.

Policy:

Residential Youth Care, Inc. will provide nutrition promotion and education, physical activities, and other recreational activities to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between nutrition education and school meal programs.

A. Planning and Periodic Review by Stakeholders

Residential Youth Care, Inc.'s Performance and Quality Improvement- Environmental, Health, and Safety Committee will assist in developing, implementing, monitoring, reviewing and, as necessary, revising the nutrition and physical activity goals. RYC will permit and encourage the participation of staff, youth, parents, food service personnel, Board Members, and other interested community members in the committee. RYC will promote opportunities to participate in the committee through parent and stakeholder communication including: newsletters, public announcements, web-postings on the RYC website, parent communication, etc.

RYC will provide the committee with appropriate information and clear guidelines to assist in the development and/or revision of relevant policies and nutrition and physical activity goals. Goals will be based on available scientific evidence for improving nutrition and physical activity programs. Goals and progress toward achievement will be presented to the Board starting with the presentation of goals within six (6) months of the passage of this policy and continuing annually thereafter.

B. Nutrition

All foods available in Residential Youth Care, Inc. facilities shall be offered to students with the consideration for promoting youth health and reducing childhood obesity.

Foods and beverages served at Residential Youth Care, Inc. facilities, operating in accordance with the National School Lunch Act, will meet the nutrition recommendations of the *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. (The U.S. Dietary Guidelines are available at: <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines>).

All foods and beverages made available at RYC facilities shall meet nutritional requirements of the National School Lunch Act, Nutritional Guidelines for All Foods sold in Schools also known as Smart Snacks at School (Federal Register/ Vol. 778, No. 125).

Residential Youth Care, Inc. will provide youth access to a variety of affordable, nutritious and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of youth; will accommodate, as much as possible, the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the youth in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe and pleasant settings and adequate time for youth to eat.

Traditional cultural foods may be exempted from the nutritional requirements when offered for educational purposes. Traditional cultural foods offered as part of the breakfast or lunch program must meet nutritional requirements.

RYC will provide potable water in the place where meals are served and elsewhere throughout the RYC facilities.

When practicable, Alaska farm and fish products will be utilized in meals and snacks.

RYC will encourage all youth to eat healthy and nutritious meals within RYC's facilities dining environment and will, to the extent practicable, involve students in meal planning.

To the extent practicable, RYC will schedule lunch as close to the middle of the school day as possible. RYC will provide opportunities for mid-morning or mid-afternoon healthy snack breaks.

RYC will limit food and beverage marketing to the promotion of foods and beverages that meet the National School Lunch Act, Nutritional Guidelines for All Foods Sold in Schools.

C. Nutritional Promotion and Education

RYC shall review and consider evidence-based strategies to set measurable goals in providing nutrition education and engaging in nutrition promotion to positively influence lifelong eating behaviors.

Suggested language may include goals related to activities and opportunities:

- Offered at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide youth with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Offered as part of not only health education classes, but also classroom instruction in subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- That include enjoyable, developmentally appropriate, culturally-relevant, participatory activities, such as contests, cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, and taste-testing;
- That promote fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, healthy food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutritional practices;
- That emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- That link with school meal programs, other food, and nutrition related community services
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and
- That include training for RYC staff

D. Physical Activity

Youth shall be provided with at least 60 minutes each day of physical activity. Whenever possible, all youth shall be given opportunities for physical activity through a range of programs including, but not limited to, intramurals, interscholastic athletics and physical activity clubs.

Indoor and outdoor facilities shall be available to youth, so that physical activity is safe and not dependent on the weather.

Using physical activity as a punishment or withholding physical activity for behavior management shall be prohibited.

Physical and Recreational activities available to youth include but not limited to are: basketball, soccer, baseball, softball, football, swimming, ping pong, pool, jogging, running and walking club, Girls on the Run, CrossFit, Tae Kwon Do, yoga, Zumba, meditation, Gym, roller skating, movies, hikes, camping, library, bowling, local tours, and running club.

E. Other Activities that Promote Youth Wellness

RYC will integrate wellness activities across the entire organization setting, not just in the kitchens, other food and beverage venues and physical activity facilities. RYC will coordinate and integrate other initiatives related to physical activity, physical education, nutrition and other wellness components so all efforts are complementary, not duplicative, and work towards the same set of goals and objectives promoting student well-being, optimal development and strong educational outcomes.

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

Community Partnerships

RYC will continue relationships with community partners (Public Health, Ketchikan Indian Community, Ketchikan Youth Initiative, PeaceHealth, Community Connections, Ketchikan Gateway Borough School District, Akeela, and University of Alaska Southeast) in support of this wellness policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with the wellness policy and its goals.

Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement

RYC will promote to parents/caregivers, families, the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in RYC-sponsored activities, as appropriate and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

RYC will have a staff wellness subcommittee that focuses on staff wellness issues, identifies and disseminates wellness resources and performs other functions that support staff wellness in coordination with human resources staff. The staff wellness subcommittee is RYC's Performance and Quality Improvement- Stakeholder's Relations Committee.

RYC will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. Examples of strategies RYC will use, as well as specific actions staff members can take, include: reimbursement for Recreational Center passes, participation in 5k marathons, the Totem to Totem marathon, participation in the annual RYC wellness clinic, and Yoga classes. RYC promotes staff members participation in health promotion programs and will support programs for staff members on healthy eating/weight management that are accessible and free or low-cost.

F. Communication with Parents

Residential Youth Care, Inc. will regularly, at least annually, inform and update the public, including youth, parents, and the community, about the content and implementation of the RYC policies that promote youth wellness.

RYC will provide information about physical activity opportunities before and after the school day; and support the efforts of parents to provide their youth with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information through the RYC website, newsletter, or other take-home materials, special events, etc.

G. Monitoring, Compliance and Evaluation

The Assistant Executive Director or designee will ensure compliance with established nutrition and physical activity wellness policies and administrative regulations. Administrative regulations may be developed to ensure that information will be geared to assist in evaluating implementation of these policies and to ensure that necessary documentation is maintained in preparation for the triennial Administrative Review conducted by Child Nutrition Programs, Department of Education and Early Development.

The Assistant Executive Director or designee will designate one or more person to be responsible for ensuring that RYC facilities comply with this policy, and that activities, including fundraisers and celebrations, are consistent with nutrition and activity goals.

Residential Youth Care, Inc. Board Members will receive an annual summary report on compliance with the established nutrition and physical activity policies, and the progress made in attaining the nutrition and activity goals. The report will also be made available to RYC Stakeholders or other interested community members.