

Wellness Policy

Christian Acres Youth Center, Inc.

October 24, 2025

Purpose and Commitment

Christian Acres is dedicated to fostering a safe, healthy, and supportive environment that enhances the potential for every Resident’s personal, academic, developmental, and social success. We recognize that access to nutritious foods and regular physical activity are essential to growth, learning, and overall well-being.

This Wellness Policy establishes a formal framework for promoting and protecting the health and wellness of all Residents through healthy eating, physical activity, and positive lifestyle habits.

The **School Food Service Manager** will serve as the **Wellness Policy Coordinator** and oversee its implementation in collaboration with the **School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC)**.

School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC)

The SHAC—formerly known as the Wellness Policy Committee—will include students/Residents, teachers, food service professionals, health professionals, and other interested community members. This group will be responsible for developing, implementing, monitoring, and reviewing wellness and physical activity policies.

The SHAC is committed to the optimal development of every Resident and will ensure an environment that promotes and supports wellness-focused learning and behavior. We believe that for Residents to achieve success in all areas, they must have access to a safe, positive, and health-promoting environment at every level and in every setting.

Nutrition Standards, Guidelines, and Marketing

Christian Acres will adhere to the following nutritional standards for all foods and beverages available on campus:

- Meals served through the **National School Lunch Program** and **School Breakfast Program** will be appealing and meet, at minimum, all federal and state nutrition requirements.
 - Foods and beverages offered outside of reimbursable meal programs will comply with nutrition guidelines established by the Wellness Committee.
 - All foods and beverages provided before school, during school, and up to 30 minutes after the school day will meet **USDA Smart Snacks in School** nutrition standards.
 - Only foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks standards may be marketed or advertised on campus.
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Nutrition Education and Promotion

Christian Acres will provide nutrition education designed to equip Residents with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote lifelong health and wellness.

- Nutrition education will be developmentally appropriate, culturally relevant, and participatory in nature, including activities such as taste testing and interactive lessons.
 - Nutrition education will be integrated across various aspects of daily living and educational settings.
 - Staff will emphasize a healthy balance between caloric intake and energy expenditure.
 - Food will **not** be used as a reward or withheld as punishment or behavioral control.
 - Staff will actively promote nutrition practices that:
 - Encourage the consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and nutrient-dense foods.
 - Utilize healthy food preparation methods.
 - Connect with other meal programs and community-based nutrition services.
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Physical Activity

Christian Acres recognizes physical activity as a vital component of overall health and wellness.

- Residents will participate in **moderate to vigorous physical activity** for at least 50% of Physical Education classes and exercise groups, unless medically exempt.
 - Opportunities for physical activity will be provided outside of structured exercise times, including during free or recreation periods.
 - Inclusive physical activity options will be provided for Residents with disabilities or special health needs.
 - Teachers and direct care staff are encouraged to incorporate physical activity opportunities throughout the day when appropriate.
 - Staff shall **not** use physical activity (e.g., running laps, push-ups) or withhold physical activity opportunities (e.g., recess, physical education) as a form of punishment.
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Wellness Team

Christian Acres will establish a **Wellness Team** consisting of direct care staff, program supervisors, nursing staff, teachers, food service workers, and Residents committed to supporting health and well-being.

The Wellness Team will:

- Promote and model healthy nutrition, physical activity, and overall wellness practices.

- Establish goals to enhance nutrition education, increase physical activity opportunities, and promote wellness initiatives across the program.
 - Support continuous improvement of wellness practices that contribute to Residents' lifelong health and success.
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Implementation and Compliance

The SHAC designee will be responsible for implementing and ensuring compliance with this policy by:

- Reviewing the policy **at least every three years** and recommending updates for approval as needed.
 - Facilitating participation of staff, supervisors, nurses, teachers, food service personnel, and Residents in policy development, implementation, and review.
 - Making the policy and related assessments publicly available, including the extent of compliance and progress toward established wellness goals.
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Communication

Christian Acres will share information about this Wellness Policy through staff meetings, newsletters, and other communication channels. The policy will also be accessible on the Christian Acres website, along with updates and progress reports.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The **School Health Advisory Committee** will evaluate this policy annually, assess progress toward established goals, and revise it as needed to ensure continued alignment with federal, state, and agency standards.

Reviewed by Committee on: 10/27/2025

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