

# **Operation SafeHouse's Wellness Policy**

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to assure our clients serving in our program an environment that will play a role in preventing childhood obesity and diet-related chronic diseases, promote and protect children and youths' health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity.

## **Nutrition Education Goals**

SafeHouse strives to make nutrition education interactive and teach our clients the skills they need to adopt healthy eating behaviors. Topics to be discussed will include: essential nutrients, nutritional deficiencies, healthy weight management, safe food preparation/handling/storage and reading food labels.

SafeHouse will:

- Offer education in the dining room, with coordination between the clients and staff.
- Include both nutrition and physical education guidelines in the client's case plan.
- Involve all staff as role models for the clients in our program.
- Encourage teamwork between staff to develop ways to integrate nutrition into daily routines.
- Offer nutrition education opportunities for our clients.

## **Physical Activity Goals**

SafeHouse will:

- Provide opportunities for our clients to develop the knowledge and skills for specific physical activities.
- Provide regular physical activity to maintain the client's physical fitness.
- Instruct the clients in our program on the short and long-term benefits of a physically active lifestyle.
- Provide training and resources to allow staff to promote lifelong physical activity among the clients in our program.

## **Other Shelter Based Activities Designed to Promote Children and Youth Wellness**

**Goal:**

Create a youth environment that is conducive to healthy eating and being physically active. Provide our clients with consistent, reliable health messages and opportunities to practice wise choices.

## **Eating Environment**

Kitchen and dining areas will be appealing and attractive to the clients serving in our program. Meals will be served in clean and pleasant settings.

## **Time and Scheduling of Meals**

Provide clients with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 20 minutes after sitting down for lunch. Schedule meal times, i.e. lunch should be scheduled between 12 p.m. and 1p.m. Meetings and activities will not be scheduled during mealtimes, unless the clients may eat during such activities.

### **Rewards or Punishments**

Foods or beverages will not be used as rewards or reinforces, especially those that do not meet the nutrition standards for foods and beverages served and we will not withhold food or beverages as a punishment.

### **Fundraising**

To support children's health and nutrition-education efforts, Operation SafeHouse sponsored fundraising activities will not involve food or will use only foods that meet the nutrition and portion size standards for foods and beverages consistent with the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

### **Professional Development Goals**

Operation SafeHouse will continue to provide professional development for all employees. Staff development programs should include appropriate certification and/or training programs for the food service employees according to their levels of responsibility.

### **Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value**

Operation SafeHouse will reduce the children and youth's access to foods of minimal nutritional value throughout the day.

We will offer healthful food and beverage items to clients serving in our program.

### **Coordinated Children and Youth Health**

Operation SafeHouse will look at offering state-wide workshops on health education.

We will also have nutrition educators attend some of the monthly staff meetings.

### **Food Safety**

Food service staff and clients will be instructed to thoroughly wash hands using proper hand-washing procedures. Thermometers in refrigerators and freezers will be checked three times per day according to the School Nutrition Program guidelines. Standards will be established that encourage children and youths to practice healthy lifestyles. Groups for clients in our program will be done once per month on safe food practices.

Operation SafeHouse has a Food Safety Plan that will be followed. Staff will plan daily schedules to encourage physical activity instead of watching television or playing video games. Activity schedules for hiking, swimming, walking, etc. will be posted on a regular basis.

### **Nutrition Messages**

Operation SafeHouse will promote foods and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for meals. Bulletin boards/common areas will have messages encouraging children and youths to eat healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products.

### **Nutrition Guidelines for All Foods Available at the Shelter**

Operation SafeHouse uses the Enhanced Food-Based Menu Planning Approach for Breakfast and Lunch, seven days a week. Three meals and a snack will be offered on a daily basis at appropriate times.

### **Guidelines for Reimbursable School Meals**

Meals served will meet federal program regulations and nutrition standards.

Meals offered will be consistent with the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans including serving a variety of foods, grain products, vegetables and fruits.

Meals will be moderate in sugar and salt.

Clients will be served three healthy meals per day and a healthy snack, which meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations.

Lunches will provide, on average over each week, the Recommended Dietary Allowance

Breakfasts will provide, on average over each week, the Recommended Dietary Allowances

Beverages offered will be water, fruit-based drinks that contain at least 100% fruit juice and that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners, non-caloric ice teas, and unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk. Less than 25% of beverages offered will be soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners, sports drinks, sweetened iced teas, fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50% real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners. Foods offered will have no more than 35% of its calories from fat (excluding nuts, seeds, peanut butter, and other nut butters) and 10% of its calories from saturated and trans fat combined, and no more than 35% of its weight from added sugars.

### **Plan for Measuring the Implementation of the Wellness Policy**

We will assess the shelter's needs.

Areas for improvement will be identified.

Policy language will address the shelters'/group homes' most severe need in nutrition education, physical activity, other activities, nutrition guidelines for food offered throughout the day and methods of evaluation.

Indicators will be identified for each policy component to be used as a gauge that will show whether the policy is working.

We will re-assess using the same tools in the original assessment and document changes.

A coordinator at each shelter will ensure the policy is implemented and she/he will collect and summarize the evaluation results.

### **Process for Involving the Community**

Representatives from each shelter/group home will work on establishing and updating the Wellness Policy.

We will look at initiatives underway in the area and discuss ways to incorporate aspects of the wellness policy.

Progress will be noted on bulletin boards/common areas.

We will seek out grant opportunities.

Solicit small business sponsorships such as Community Service Clubs.

We will seek feedback through staff and youth surveys.

Maintain, Measure, and Evaluate the Effort

We will make an on-going effort through monthly staff team meetings.

**Operation SafeHouse is an equal opportunity employer and provider.**