



GEO Academies EBR

Wellness Policy

This Wellness Policy is approved for use for the 2023-24 School Year.

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Wellness Policy

Preamble

Geo Academies EBR (hereto referred to as the School Food Authority) is committed to the optimal development of every student. The School Food Solutions (SFA) believes that for Scholars to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success, we need to create positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during, and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism, and better performance on cognitive tasks.^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among Scholars.^{8,9,10} In addition, Scholars who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality physical education, and extracurricular activities – do better academically.^{11,12,13,14}

This policy outlines the SFA's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all Scholars to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Scholars in the SFA have access to healthy foods throughout the school day—both through reimbursable school meals and other foods available throughout the school campus—in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards;
- Scholars receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Scholars have opportunities to be physically active before, during, and after school;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The community is engaged in supporting the work of the SFA in creating continuity between school and other settings for Scholars and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- The SFA establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

The Wellness Policy in its entirety may be viewed in each School's cafeteria. This policy applies to all Scholars, staff, and schools in the SFA.

I. School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

The SFA will convene a representative SFA wellness committee (hereto referred to as the SWC or work within an existing school health committee) that meets at least two times per year to establish goals for and oversee school health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation, and periodic review and update of this SFA-level wellness policy (heretofore referred to as “wellness policy”).

The SWC membership will represent all school levels (elementary and secondary schools) and include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: parents and caregivers; Scholars; representatives of the school nutrition program (ex., school nutrition director); physical education teachers; health education teachers; school health professionals (ex., health education teachers, school health services staff [i.e., nurses, physicians, dentists, health educators, and other allied health personnel who provide school health services], and mental health and social services staff [i.e., school counselors, psychologists, social workers, or psychiatrists]; school administrators (ex., superintendent, principal, vice principal), school board members; health professionals (ex., dietitians, doctors, nurses, dentists); and the general public. To the extent possible, the SWC will include representatives from each school building and reflect the diversity of the community.

Leadership

The Superintendent or designee(s) will convene the SWC and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and will ensure each school’s compliance with the policy.

Each school will designate a school wellness policy coordinator, who will ensure compliance with the policy.

Name	Title	Email address	Role
Kaylee Smith	School Food Solutions	kaylee@schoolfoodsolutions.org	Education Service Provider
Mona Collins	Business Operations Manager	mcollins@geoacademies.org	GEO Wellness Policy Coordinator
Deloris Brown	Account Manager, Chartwells	deloris.brown@compas-s-usa.com	FSMC Representative

II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

The SFA will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions, and timelines specific to each school, and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where, and when, as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. It is recommended that the school use the [Healthy Schools Program online tools](#) to complete a school level assessment based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's School Health Index, create an action plan that fosters implementation, and generate an annual progress report.

This wellness policy and the progress reports can be found at:
<http://www.geoprep.com/index.html>

Recordkeeping

The SFA will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy at the Geo Prep Main Office, and/or on the website, <http://www.geoprep.com/index.html>. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with community involvement requirements, including (1) Efforts to actively solicit SWC membership from the required stakeholder groups; and (2) These groups' participation in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy;
- Documentation of annual policy progress reports for each school under its jurisdiction; and
- Documentation of the triennial assessment* of the policy for each school under its jurisdiction;
- Documentation demonstrating compliance with public notification requirements, including: (1) Methods by which the wellness policy, annual progress reports, and triennial assessments are made available to the public; and (2) Efforts to actively notify families about the availability of wellness policy.

Annual Progress Reports

The SFA will compile and publish an annual report to share basic information about the wellness policy and report on the progress of the schools within the SFA in meeting wellness goals. **This annual report will be published around the same time each year in May.** and will include information from each school within the SFA. This report will include, but is not limited to:

- The website address for the wellness policy and/or how the public can receive/access a copy of the wellness policy;
- A description of each school's progress in meeting the wellness policy goals;
- A summary of each school's events or activities related to wellness policy implementation;
- The name, position title, and contact information of the designated SFA policy leader(s) identified in Section I; and
- Information on how individuals and the public can get involved with the School Wellness

Committee (SWC).

The annual report will be available in English and translated upon request.

The SFA will notify households/families of the availability of the annual report on their website.

The SWC, will establish and monitor goals and objectives for the SFA's schools, specific and appropriate for each instructional unit (middle, and high school, as appropriate), for each of the content-specific components listed in Sections III-V of this policy.

Triennial Progress Assessments

At least once every three years, the SFA will evaluate compliance with the wellness policy to assess the implementation of the policy and include:

- The extent to which schools under the jurisdiction of the SFA are in compliance with the wellness policy;
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the SFA's wellness policy.

School Food Solutions, the SFA's education service provider, will complete the triennial assessment. Contact information: info@schoolfoodsolutions.org

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The SWC will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual progress reports and triennial assessments, and/or as SFA priorities change; community needs change; wellness goals are met; new health science, information, and technology emerges; and new Federal or state guidance or standards are issued. **The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.**

Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications

The SFA is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. The SFA will actively communicate ways in which representatives of SWC and others can participate in the development, implementation, and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for that SFA. The SFA will also inform parents of the improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply, and a description of and

compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. The SFA will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the SFA's website, as well as non-electronic mechanisms, such as front-office postings, to ensure that all families are actively notified of the content of, implementation of, and updates to the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. The SFA will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the SFA and individual schools are communicating other important school information with parents.

III. Nutrition

School Meals

The SFA is committed to serving healthy meals to Scholars, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and zero grams *trans* fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meet the nutrition needs of school Scholars within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school Scholars, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns, and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs.

All schools within the SFA participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Afterschool Snack Program. All schools within the SFA are committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all Scholars;
- Are appealing and attractive to Scholars;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (The SFA offers reimbursable school meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](#).)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using the following [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#):
 - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of Scholars
 - All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt Scholars to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal
 - A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to Scholars (e.g., salad bars, snack rooms, etc.)
 - Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor, and promotional ideas
 - Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options
- Menus will be created/reviewed by a Registered Dietitian or other certified nutrition professional.
- School meals are administered by a team of child nutrition professionals.
- The SFA child nutrition program will accommodate Scholars with special dietary needs.
- Participation in Federal child nutrition programs will be promoted among Scholars and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their Scholars' school.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school nutrition program directors, managers, and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the [USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals](#). These school nutrition personnel will refer to [USDA's Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website](#) to search for training that meets their learning needs.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all Scholars throughout the school day* and throughout every school campus* ("school campus" and "school day" are defined in the glossary). The SFA will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. In addition, Scholars will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

Competitive Foods and Beverages

The SFA is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to Scholars on the school campus* during the school day* support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (i.e., "competitive" foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. **No competitive food sales will be allowed at the K-8 schools within the SFA. High School sites will be allowed to sell competitive foods meeting Smart Snacks standards during the school day.**

Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day, and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits. A summary of the standards and information are available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available at www.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks.

To support healthy food choices and improve student health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to Scholars on the school campus during the extended school day will meet or exceed the state nutrition. These standards will apply to all services where foods and beverages are sold, which may include, but are not limited to, a la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores, and snack or food carts.

Celebrations and Rewards

All foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the state nutrition standards, including through:

1. At the beginning of each school year, SFA will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas. Healthy party ideas from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) and from the [USDA](#).
2. The SFA will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a [list of alternative ways to reward Scholars](#). **Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.**

Outside Food and Beverages

Students may bring outside food and beverages to school. **No outside food or beverages may be reheated in microwaves on site at any District campus.**

Nutrition Promotion

Nutrition promotion and education positively influence lifelong eating behaviors by using evidence-based techniques and nutrition messages, and by creating food environments that encourage healthy nutrition choices and encourage participation in school meal programs. Scholars and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to Scholars and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff and teachers, parents, Scholars, and the community.

The SFA will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all Scholars throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs.

Nutrition Education

The SFA aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by Scholars. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

The SFA is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for all Scholars to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. The SFA strives to teach Scholars how to make informed choices about nutrition, health, and physical activity. These efforts will be weakened if Scholars are subjected to advertising on SFA property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information the SFA is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of the SFA to protect and promote student's health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with the SFA's wellness policy.

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to Scholars on the school campus during the extended school day will meet or exceed the state nutrition standards.

Food advertising and marketing is defined¹⁵ as an oral, written, or graphic statements made for the purpose of promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller, or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product. This term includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Brand names, trademarks, logos or tags, except when placed on a physically present food or beverage product or its container.
- Displays, such as on vending machine exteriors.
- **Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on school equipment, such as marquees,**

message boards, scoreboards, or backboards (Note: immediate replacement of these items are not required; however, SFAs will consider replacing or updating scoreboards or other durable equipment over time so that decisions about the replacement include compliance with the marketing policy.)

- Corporate brand, logo, name, or trademark on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans, and other food service equipment; as well as on posters, book covers, pupil assignment books, or school supplies displayed, distributed, offered, or sold by the SFA.
- Advertisements in school publications or school mailings.
- Free product samples, taste tests, or coupons of a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product.

IV. Physical Activity

Scholars should participate in 30 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of Scholars' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive, school-based physical activity program (CSPAP) that includes these components: physical education, classroom-based physical activity, , and out-of-school time activities and the SFA is committed to providing these opportunities. Schools will ensure that these varied opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education (addressed in "Physical Education" subsection).

Physical Education

The SFA will provide Scholars with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help Scholars develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts (discussed in the "*Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education*" subsection).

All Scholars will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. The SFA will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all Scholars

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

The SFA will include in the health education curriculum the following essential topics on physical activity:

- The physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Health-related fitness, that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- Differences between physical activity, exercise, and fitness
- Overcoming barriers to physical activity
- Decreasing sedentary activities, such as TV watching
- Opportunities for physical activity in the community
- Preventing injury during physical activity
- Weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia, and sunburn while being physically active
- How much physical activity is enough, that is, determining frequency, intensity, time, and type of physical activity
- Developing an individualized physical activity and fitness plan

- Monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan
- Dangers of using performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids
- Social influences on physical activity, including media, family, peers, and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness
- How to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity

Active Academics

Teachers will incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into “core” subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, math, language arts, social studies, and others) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day.

Teachers will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the Scholars whenever feasible.

V. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

The SFA will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, other food and beverage venues, and physical activity facilities. The SFA 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.

Schools in the SFA are encouraged to coordinate content across curricular areas that promote student health, such as teaching nutrition concepts in mathematics, with consultation provided by either the school or the SFA’s curriculum experts.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state, or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be coordinated with and complementary of the wellness policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the SFA/SWC. All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity opportunities.

Community Partnerships

The SFA will attempt to develop relationships with community partners (i.e. hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, etc.) 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 Engagement

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

As described in the “Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications” subsection, the SFA will use electronic mechanisms (such as email or displaying notices on the SFA’s website), as well as non-electronic mechanisms, (such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home to parents), to ensure that all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

Glossary:

Extended School Day - time during before and afterschool activities that includes clubs, intramural sports, etc.

School Campus - areas that are owned or leased by the school and used at any time for school-related activities such as the school building or on the school campus, including on the outside of the school building, school buses or other vehicles used to transport Scholars, athletic fields, and stadiums (e.g. on scoreboards, coolers, cups, and water bottles), or parking lots.

School Day - midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

Triennial – recurring every three years.

¹ Bradley, B, Green, AC. Do Health and Education Agencies in the United States Share Responsibility for Academic Achievement and Health? A Review of 25 years of Evidence About the Relationship of Adolescents' Academic Achievement and Health Behaviors, *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2013; 52(5):523–532.

² Meyers AF, Sampson AE, Weitzman M, Rogers BL, Kayne H. School breakfast program and school performance. *American Journal of Diseases of Children*. 1989;143(10):1234–1239.

³ Murphy JM. Breakfast and learning: an updated review. *Current Nutrition & Food Science*. 2007; 3:3–36.

⁴ Murphy JM, Pagano ME, Nachmani J, Sperling P, Kane S, Kleinman RE. The relationship of school breakfast to psychosocial and academic functioning: Cross-sectional and longitudinal observations in an inner-city school sample. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*. 1998;152(9):899–907.

⁵ Pollitt E, Mathews R. Breakfast and cognition: an integrative summary. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. 1998; 67(4), 804S–813S.

⁶ Rampersaud GC, Pereira MA, Girard BL, Adams J, Metz J. Breakfast habits, nutritional status, body weight, and academic performance in children and adolescents. *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*. 2005;105(5):743–760, quiz 761–762.

⁷ Taras, H. Nutrition and student performance at school. *Journal of School Health*. 2005;75(6):199–213.

⁸ MacLellan D, Taylor J, Wood K. Food intake and academic performance among adolescents. *Canadian Journal of Dietetic Practice and Research*. 2008;69(3):141–144.

⁹ Neumark-Sztainer D, Story M, Dixon LB, Resnick MD, Blum RW. Correlates of inadequate consumption of dairy products among adolescents. *Journal of Nutrition Education*. 1997;29(1):12–20.

¹⁰ Neumark-Sztainer D, Story M, Resnick MD, Blum RW. Correlates of inadequate fruit and vegetable consumption among adolescents. *Preventive Medicine*. 1996;25(5):497–505.

¹¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *The association between school-based physical activity, including physical education, and academic performance*. Atlanta, GA: US Department of Health and Human Services, 2010.

¹² Singh A, Uijtewillighe L, Twisk J, van Mechelen W, Chinapaw M. *Physical activity and performance at school: A systematic review of the literature including a methodological quality assessment*. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*, 2012; 166(1):49-55.

¹³ Haapala E, Poikkeus A-M, Kukkonen-Harjula K, Tompuri T, Lintu N, Väistö J, Leppänen P, Laaksonen D, Lindi V, Lakka T. *Association of physical activity and sedentary behavior with academic skills – A follow-up study among primary school children*. *PLoS ONE*, 2014; 9(9): e107031.

¹⁴ Hillman C, Pontifex M, Castelli D, Khan N, Raine L, Scudder M, Drollette E, Moore R, Wu C-T, Kamijo K. *Effects of the FITKids randomized control trial on executive control and brain function*. *Pediatrics* 2014; 134(4): e1063-1071.

¹⁵ Change Lab Solutions. (2014). *District Policy Restricting the Advertising of Food and Beverages Not Permitted to be Sold on School Grounds*. Retrieved from <http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/district-policy-school-food-ads>.

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