

## **Rationale:**

The link between nutrition, physical activity and learning is well documented. Healthy eating and activity patterns are essential for students to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth, and life-long health and well-being. Healthy eating and physical activity are essential to reduce risk for many chronic diseases. Schools have a responsibility to help students learn, establish and maintain lifelong healthy eating and activity patterns. Well planned and effectively implemented school nutrition and fitness programs have been shown to enhance students' overall health as well as their behavior and academic achievement in school. Employee wellness also is an integral part of a healthy school environment, since school employees can be daily role models for healthy behaviors.

## **Goal**

All students at George Washington Academy (GWA) will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to make nutritious food choices and enjoyable physical activity choices for a lifetime. All faculty and staff at GWA are encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

To meet this goal, GWA adopts this school wellness policy with the following commitments to nutrition education, physical activity, nutrition guidelines, other school based activities, and implementations. This policy is designed to effectively utilize school and community resources to equitably serve the needs and interests of all students, families, and staff, taking into consideration difference in culture.

This policy will be made available to our stakeholders on the school website, through staff training, and education of the students and families.

This policy may be updated to reflect new federal and state guidelines.

## **Nutrition Education**

- The school cafeteria or eating area serves as a learning laboratory to support nutrition education through menu offerings and signage.
- The school will provide education for students, families, and staff to help them learn skills needed to practice lifelong healthy eating.
- The classroom, cafeteria and other school venues provide clear and consistent messages that explain and reinforce healthy eating and physical activity habits.

## **Promotion of Healthy Eating and Nutrition Guidelines**

- Promotion and marketing of a variety of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grain and low fat dairy products. This includes all foods sold by GWA. By July 1, 2015, all foods must comply with the federal Smart Snacks.
- Offer lunch service which is a good source of nutrients, moderate in sodium, moderate or low in fat, and moderate in sugar that is not naturally occurring in the food and moderate in calories.

## 455 - Health and Wellness Policy (cont.)

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- Classroom celebrations should encourage healthy choices and portion control. Celebrations involving treat food will be limited to Halloween, Christmas, and Valentine's Day. During these three food parties, a healthy food option should also be offered alongside the treats. Students who want to bring treats for their birthday should be encouraged to bring non-food items or healthy snacks instead.
- Drinks should be limited to water, 1% (or lower) milk, fat free chocolate milk, and juices that are 100% juice with no sugar added.
- Strive to improve student nutrition behaviors on the school campus; include an increase of healthier meal choices by students to include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low fat dairy products.
- Serve school meals which meet the USDA nutrition standards for all meals as well as provide sufficient choices.
- Designated lunch periods for all students should offer sufficient time to enjoy eating healthy foods. Lunch periods will be scheduled near the middle of the school day when possible.
- Students shall be encouraged to try healthy food items with which they are not familiar to promote healthy eating habits.
- Support healthy eating by utilizing the food service area as a learning laboratory to support classroom instruction through menu offerings and signs supporting healthy eating.
- Food and beverages are not used as reward or punishment. Time scheduled for lunch should never be shortened or taken away.
- Provide students opportunities to practice healthy habits including choosing from healthy food options, eating in relaxed and comfortable surroundings, and enjoying daily physical activity.
- GWA will not restrict incentive programs.

### Special Diets

GWA is committed to providing all students with the nutritious and safe meals they need to be healthy. In order to ensure that all children shall have an equal opportunity to participate in school meal programs, GWA shall:

- Design menus to accommodate cultural food preferences and common dietary requests, including allergies.
- Implement a procedure to process requests for meal modifications

### Physical Activity

- GWA will ensure that all students receive regular, age appropriate quality physical education.
- Provide within the school environment safe enjoyable activities for all students, including those who are not athletically gifted and those with special needs.
- Promote the benefits of doing regular amounts of physical activity.
- Schools should ensure that physical activity facilities on school grounds are kept safe and well-maintained.
- Physical activity should be encouraged throughout the school day to help improve on-task behavior.
- Students will be encouraged to be physically moving during recess.
- Teachers and staff are encouraged not to withhold recess, PE, or other physical activities as a punishment for poor behavior, incomplete class work, or remediation purposes.

### Goals for Other School Based Activities

- The before and after-school environment includes physical activity and promotes healthy eating habits as outlined above, including clubs, celebrations, fundraisers, meetings, and any other extra-curricular activities.
- Dining room supervisory staff (teachers, aids, janitorial staff, etc.) shall receive appropriate training in how to maintain a safe, orderly, and pleasant eating environment.

### Staff as Role Models

- Train staff who supervise student dining areas to encourage healthy eating patterns through positive experiences, allowing students adequate time to eat.
- Offer opportunities and encouragement for staff to model healthy eating habits.

### Food Safety/Food Security

- All foods made on campus will comply with state and local food safety and sanitation regulations.
- Implement Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans and guidelines to prevent food illness in school.
- All food service equipment and facilities must meet applicable local and state standards concerning health, safe food preparation, handling and storage, drinking water, sanitation and workplace safety.

### Measuring Implementation:

- Form a committee of shareholders to oversee and make recommendations for school wellness. This committee will be made up of parents, students, teachers, school health professionals, school administrators, the school board, and the general public. This committee will not exclude any person who wishes to be a member. The committee chair will be responsible for development, implementation, periodic review, and update of the wellness policy. The committee will meet triennially in a public forum advertised to the school, on the school website and by social media. The committee chair will report to GWA's Board of Directors.
- Prepare and submit a triennial report from the school's wellness committee to the Board's Campus Management/Safety Committee regarding the progress toward implementation of the school wellness policy and recommendations for any revisions to the policy as necessary.
- Periodically assess how well the policy is being managed and enforced.
- Conduct a triennial review of the progress toward school wellness policy goals and identify areas for improvement. This review will include a survey of school staff, parents, and students in order to provide a good sample of overall school wellness and compliance.