

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.

GWA shall engage the community in supporting the work of the local school in creating continuity between schools and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits. GWA shall establish and maintain an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication, and monitoring of the policy. The GWA community (including parents, students, food service professionals, physical education teachers, school health professionals, community health partners, school nurses, the GWA board, and administrators) shall be encouraged and invited via email to participate in the development and assessment of the wellness policy. GWA will utilize a self-evaluation or planning tool to assess the effectiveness and quality of the policy.

Nutrition

GWA is committed to providing meals to students that offer an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat dairy products, provide zero grams of trans-fat per serving, and limit saturated fat

and sodium. Meal programs at GWA shall seek to help children develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors, support healthy choices, and improve overall student health and well-being through the following policies and practices.

Nutrition Education

- Nutrition education is taught as part of the Utah Core Standards for Health Education in grades K-7 consistent with R277-700.
- The nutrition curriculum is based on the Utah Core Standards for Health Education, which includes culturally and developmentally appropriate material.
- Nutrition education is incorporated into classroom instruction beyond health in subject areas such as mathematics, social sciences, language arts, and science.
- School nutrition services and health educators coordinate to link the nutrition curriculum with activities in the cafeteria. The cafeteria is used to provide opportunities for students to apply lessons from the classroom and adopt healthy behaviors by choosing food in the cafeteria.
- Nutrition education and training are provided to teachers and other staff to help model and encourage healthy behaviors.

School Food Culture

- Fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat dairy products are featured in school menus, are displayed in an attractive manner, and are prepared appropriately.
- Food items available to children through school meals, a la carte, celebrations, fundraisers, etc. support healthy food choices and the goal of improving student health and well-being.
- GWA shall provide an environment that ensures students have the best opportunity to practice healthy eating behaviors with minimal distractions. There shall be no advertising on GWA property that conflicts with health information provided through nutrition education and wellness efforts.
- All items sold to students during the school day meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Questions regarding food-related fundraisers, school stores, etc. should be directed to the Food Service Department.

Eating Time

- GWA recognizes mealtime as an integral time that allows students to enjoy eating, explore and try healthy options, as well as socialize. Students shall be provided at a minimum of 10 minutes for traditional breakfast and breakfast after the bell models and 20 minutes for lunch, which excludes time to arrive at the cafeteria and waiting in line.
- Breakfast in the Classroom may be counted as instructional time.
- Students are served meals at an appropriate and reasonable time of day.
- Lunch shall follow recess whenever possible, which can help to increase the intake of healthy items, decrease food waste, and improve behavior. Considerations shall be made for students with medical needs, such as diabetes and hypoglycemia.

Celebrations and Rewards

- GWA shall not regularly use food as a reward or incentive for children, as they may undermine healthy nutrition practices being taught, teach children to eat when they are not hungry, and set the stage for unhealthy habits that can contribute to obesity.
- Teachers and parent groups shall be provided with a list of fun, non-food rewards, and celebration ideas.
- Food and beverages shall not regularly be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

Promotion & Marketing

Promotion of food and beverages on campus shall be limited to only items that meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Students shall receive consistent nutrition messaging across settings, including classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias. Nutrition messages shall be emphasized to students by using these strategies:

- Display posters in classrooms, hallways, the cafeteria, etc. to promote healthy eating.
- Conduct taste tests with students to promote healthy options, inform menu development, and garner enthusiasm around trying new foods.
- Promote nutrition programs and provide nutrition tips and snacks at interactive family events such as parent-teacher conferences.
- Host a health and wellness fair to bring in community partners and provide nutrition resources.
- Nutrition messages shall be infused into the communication channels between GWA and households/community (newsletters, social media, websites, etc.).
- Create a wellness-focused school newsletter (Healthy Patriot) to promote healthy eating and physical activity to families.
- Share short nutrition and physical activity tips during the morning announcements.
- Allow students to visit the water fountain throughout the school day and to carry water bottles in class. Letters shall be sent home to parents to encourage participation.
- Promote a healthy topic each month on a bulletin board to be displayed in the school.
- Cafeterias shall be decorated with murals, artwork, posters, and table tents to promote good nutrition during breakfast and lunch.

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 written procedure to process requests for meal modifications.

- Create a team of individuals such as a 504 coordinator, school nurse, menu planner, food service director, teachers, aides, etc. that is tasked to:
 - ensure each child with special dietary needs receives appropriate accommodations,
 - discuss and implement best practices,
 - safeguard student confidentiality,
 - protect children in situations where food is served outside the cafeteria, such as classroom parties, and
 - involve parents and guardians in the process to prevent miscommunication.

See [USDA Guidance](#) for more information.

Physical Activity

Children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP) framework. CSPAP framework reflects strong coordination with the following components:

- Quality physical education is the foundation.
- Physical activity before, during, and after school.
- Staff involvement and family and community engagement.

GWA shall ensure that these varied physical activity opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education (addressed in the “Physical Education” subsection). GWA shall be encouraged to successfully address all CSPAP areas.

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to; recess, classroom physical activity breaks, or physical education) shall not be withheld as punishment for any reason. Teachers and other school personnel shall not use physical activity (e.g., running laps, push-ups) as punishment. GWA shall provide teachers and other school staff with a list of ideas for alternative ways to discipline students.

To the extent practicable, GWA shall ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe, and that equipment is available to students to be active. GWA shall conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

Physical Education

GWA shall provide students with physical education using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with the [Utah Core Standards for Physical Education in grades K-7](#), consistent with [R277-700](#). The physical education curriculum shall promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and shall help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate health education concepts.

The curriculum shall support the essential components of physical education, such as:

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- All students shall be provided an equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes taught by qualified teachers.
- All GWA students shall participate in physical education annually ([R277-700](#)).
- The GWA physical education program shall promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments and shall use criterion-based reporting for each student.
- All physical education classes shall be overseen by a licensed teacher who is certified or endorsed to teach physical education.
- IDEA requires that each child with a disability participates with nondisabled children in these programs and activities to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of that child. Physical education services, specially designed if necessary, must be made available to every child with a disability receiving free appropriate public education unless the public agency enrolls children without disabilities and does not provide physical education to children without disabilities in the same grades. Each public agency must take steps to provide nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities, including athletics, in the manner necessary to afford children with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation in those services and activities. Guidance on the legal aspects of the provision of extracurricular athletic opportunities to students is provided under the IDEA link.

Recess (Elementary)

GWA recognizes that recess is a necessary structural component of the elementary school day for all students.

Schools:

- Shall provide at least 20 minutes of active daily recess to all elementary school students.
- Shall not withhold recess, PE, or other physical activities as a punishment for poor behavior, incomplete class work, or remediation purposes.
- Shall not require students to engage in physical activity as punishment (such as running extra laps).
- Shall provide recess before lunch when schedules allow.
 - Considerations shall be made for students with medical needs, such as diabetes and hypoglycemia.
- Shall offer outdoor recess when weather is feasible for outdoor play. Considerations shall be made for heat, cold, or other extreme weather conditions.
 - In the event that the school must conduct indoor recess, teachers and staff shall follow indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students.
- Shall make accommodations for students to participate indoors for poor air quality on mandatory action days.
- Shall create schedules for recess to complement, not substitute, physical education class.
- Shall provide recess monitors or teachers to encourage students to be active and serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Classroom Physical Activity Breaks

GWA recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks where they can be physically active or stretch. Students shall be offered periodic opportunities to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days of a typical school week. Teachers shall provide short (3-5-minute) physical activity breaks to students during and between classroom time at least three days per week. These physical activity breaks shall complement, not substitute, physical education, recess, and class transition periods.

GWA shall provide resources, tools, and technology with ideas for classroom physical activity breaks. [Healthy Bodies Healthy Minds Flipbook](#) is a resource providing short activities that can be done in a classroom setting. Additional resources and ideas are available through USDA and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation.

Active Academics

Teachers shall incorporate movement and kinesthetic learning approaches into core subject instruction when possible (e.g., science, mathematics, language arts, social studies) and do their part to limit sedentary behavior during the school day. GWA shall support classroom teachers in incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects by providing annual professional development opportunities and resources.

Teachers shall serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Before and After School Activities

GWA shall offer opportunities for students to participate in physical activity before and/or after the school day through a variety of methods. GWA shall encourage students to be physically active before and after school. For non-active activities and clubs, GWA shall encourage movement breaks and healthy snacks.

Active Transport

GWA shall support active transport to and from school, such as walking or biking. Under Utah Code ([Utah Code 53G-4-402](#)), GWA is required to create and distribute a Safe Routes Plan. The Safe Routes Plans shall encourage an increase in walking and biking to school.

Health Promotion

Staff Wellness

The GWA wellness committee shall develop, promote, and oversee a multifaceted plan to promote staff health and wellness. The plan shall be based on input solicited from staff and should outline ways to encourage healthy eating, physical activity, and other elements of a healthy lifestyle among staff.

GWA shall encourage staff to serve as positive role models for healthy eating and physical fitness. GWA shall promote work-site wellness programs and may provide opportunities for regular physical activity among employees.

Nursing Mothers Accommodations - see Policy 290 Nursing Mothers Accommodations on gwacademy.org

GWA shall develop a Comprehensive School Physical Activity framework that allows staff to participate in or lead physical activity opportunities throughout the school day. An employee wellness program shall be implemented in each building to meet the unique wellness needs of school staff.

Chronic, Infectious & Acute Disease Management

GWA shall have a minimum of one professional registered school nurse who can assist with the management of chronic, infectious, and acute diseases the students may have. The school nurse is the best person to manage these conditions in the school setting.

GWA shall have at least one automated external defibrillator (AED) per school. This device should be examined monthly to make sure all components are working properly.

A minimum of two school employees shall be certified in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). At least one person certified in first aid and CPR shall be on-site when school is in session (R392-200-9).

Before the school nurse can delegate a medical task to a school employee, the nurse shall complete an individualized healthcare plan (IHP) or emergency action plan (EAP). The delegated task shall be identified in the IHP (R156-31b-701a). The Utah Department of Health has created simplified IHPs and EAPs for use in [GWA] for students with the most common chronic health conditions (allergies, asthma, diabetes, seizures). These forms can be found at <http://choosehealth.utah.gov/prek-12/school-nurses/guidelines/forms.php>.

GWA shall provide seizure awareness training to all teachers and administrators of students with epilepsy. GWA shall provide seizure awareness training for all school staff who interact with or supervise students (Utah Code 53G-9-213).

Medication Management

(see GWA Policy 490 – Medication and Administration at gwacademy.org)

Mental Health

Mental health means a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being which can affect how a person thinks, feels, and acts including how a person handles stress, relates to others, and makes healthy choices (R277-625).

Mental health is more than the absence of illness, it is an integral component of health and well-being. GWA understands the role mental health plays in the school context because it is central to our students' social, emotional, and academic success. When students' mental health is supported they are better able to learn, make decisions, build relationships, cope with life's challenges, and thrive.

Mental health exists on a continuum and is determined by a complex interplay of individual, social, and structural stresses and vulnerabilities. Promoting mental wellness and reducing mental illness for all students is a priority that can be achieved by implementing school-based mental health policies and practices. These efforts are categorized by: prevention, identification, intervention, and recovery.

Prevention

Prevention efforts in GWA involve a variety of proactive strategies with the goal of increasing student well-being and reducing future mental health challenges in our school community. The goal of our prevention efforts is to decrease risk factors and increase key protective factors in students, such as resilience, feelings of safety and connectedness to school, appropriate social connections with both adults and peers, social-emotional competence, and a knowledge of development. These protective factors mitigate the effects of risks to students, build students' strengths, and promote the healthy development of students.

Education

GWA commits to teaching the mental and emotional health standards as part of the Health Education Core Standards in grades K-7, and utilizes vetted resources provided by the USBE.

Identification

Mental Health Screening

Routine mental health screenings are a key part of understanding youth mental health. Mental health screenings in schools, with active, written consent from parents, allow staff to identify potential mental health conditions early and connect students with help.

GWA may provide mental health screenings for students within the school setting for the purpose of identifying if a student is experiencing, or is at risk of experiencing, issues related to the student's mental health. Mental health screenings are NOT a diagnostic tool or process, or a system or process used by a student's teacher to observe behavior for the purpose of targeted learning interventions.

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According to Board Rule R277-625, mental health screenings may only screen for depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. At this time, no other mental health conditions may be screened. While behavioral screenings are not equivalent to mental health screenings, a screener that includes questions regarding depression, anxiety, or suicidal ideation does fall under the mental health screening program and must adhere to the same policies. A list of up-to-date approved mental health screening tools can be found here.

GWA follows the guidelines outlined within 53F-2-522 and R277-625 regarding Mental Health Screening.

Intervention

GWA utilizes a tiered system of support to structure and deliver mental health interventions to students. Universal, school-wide programs which include mental health literacy and efforts to reduce stigma surrounding mental health issues are provided within GWA. Additionally, GWA provides targeted and individualized interventions to students who have been identified as needing additional support through identification and assessment efforts. Targeted and individualized mental health interventions include individual and/or group counseling and/or therapy provided by professionals working within the scope of practice of their license. Intervention may also be provided through contracted services from community mental health professionals.

GWA only provides these services to students upon written parental consent as referenced in GWA consent policy and procedure in accordance with 53E-9-203. Parental consent is not required when GWA staff believes a student is at risk of attempting suicide, physical self-harm, or harming others. GWA staff may intervene to ask the student questions about their student's suicidal thoughts, physically self-harming behavior or thoughts of harming others for the purposes of referring the student to appropriate prevention services and immediately informing the student's parents as referenced in [GWA procedure about parental notification].

Recovery

Return to Learn

Students may need to leave school temporarily to access more intensive mental health support. GWA supports students returning to school by partnering with community providers, parents, and the student to develop a transition plan.

Monitoring and Evaluations

The GWA Health and Wellness Committee will meet triennially along with ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the Health and Wellness Policy which is crucial to ensure its ongoing effectiveness and relevance.

Assessment Resources:

This GWA Wellness Policy Evaluation Tool was created using the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) Model Wellness Policy as a guide and is meant to assist GWAs in identifying any gaps within their own policies and practices. https://utahgov.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9WXW2GY9cpPexXo

A triennial assessment of the GWA Wellness Policy is required by USDA FNS for those participating in the National School Lunch Program. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/local-school-wellness-policy>.

GWA will use an assessment tool provided by the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) and will do so on a triennial basis as required.