**Wellness Policy**

**National School Lunch Program**

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**Preamble**

Genesis Learning Centers (hereto referred to as the GLC) is committed to the optimal development of every student. GLC believes ALL students can achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, by creating a positive, safe, and healthy learning environments across settings, 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]](#endnote-2),[[2]](#endnote-3),[[3]](#endnote-4),[[4]](#endnote-5),[[5]](#endnote-6),[[6]](#endnote-7),[[7]](#endnote-8) Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students.[[8]](#endnote-9),[[9]](#endnote-10),[[10]](#endnote-11) In addition, students 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]](#endnote-12),[[12]](#endnote-13),[[13]](#endnote-14),[[14]](#endnote-15). Finally, there is evidence that adequate hydration is associated with better cognitive performance. 15,16,17

This policy outlines GLC’s approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all students 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:

* Students at GLC 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.
* Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors.
* Students have opportunities to be physically active during 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 supports GLC in creating continuity across settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits.
* GLC establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all students, staff, and schools that are part of GLC. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

**School Wellness Committee**

*GLC will embed standing agenda items into the current meeting structure used by the individual School and Agency-Wide Health, Safety, and Wellness Committees. Scheduling meetings, reviewing the agendas and minutes, and tracking the completion of action items are managed at the school and agency-level by the School Services Manager and Student Services Manager, Health, Safety, and Wellness (HSW) Committee Co-Chairs.*

GLC will establish a wellness committee by working within the existing school and agency safety committee structures that meet monthly at the school level and quarterly at the agency level to establish goals for and oversee school health, safety, and wellness policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of this wellness policy (heretofore referred as “wellness policy”).

The HSW Committee Co-Chairs will recruit participants from all school levels (elementary and secondary schools) and include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: parents and caregivers, students, representatives of the school nutrition program (School Services Manager) teachers; clinicians (e.g., BCBAs and Social Workers), agency administrative staff, school leadership team members, board members, external health professionals (e.g., dietitians, doctors, nurses, dentists), and the general public. To the extent possible, the HSW Committee will include representatives from each school and reflect the diversity of the community.

**Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability and Community Engagement**

***Implementation Plan***

GLC will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of the adopted 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.

***Recordkeeping***

GLC will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy at: 430 Allied Drive, Nashville, Tennessee 37211. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

* The written wellness policy;
* Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public;
* Documentation of efforts to review and update the Local Schools Wellness Policy; including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods the district uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the HSW Committee;
* Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements;
* The most recent assessment on the implementation of the school wellness policy; and
* Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the Wellness Policy has been made available to the public.

***Annual Notification of Policy***

GLC will actively inform families and the public each year of basic information about this policy, including its content, any updates to the policy and implementation status. GLC will make this information available via the agency’s website and/or organization-wide communications. GLC will provide as much information as possible about the schools’ nutrition environment. Annually, GLC will publicize the name and contact information for the agency and school chairs leading and coordinating the committees, as well as information on how the public can get involved with the school wellness committee.

***Triennial Progress Assessments***

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

* The extent to which GLC’s schools are in compliance with the wellness policy;
* The extent to which the GLC’s wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s model wellness policy; and
* A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of GLC’s wellness policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the assessment and contact information is the School Services Manager. The HSW Committee Co-Chairs, in collaboration with individual schools, will monitor compliance with this wellness policy. Each of GLC’s schoolwill actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial assessment summary report.

***Revisions and Updating the Policy***

The HSW Committee will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual School Health Index and triennial assessments and/or as GLC’s 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 District is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. GLC will actively communicate ways in which representatives of HSW Committee 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 school. GLC 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. GLC will use   
technology-based modes of communication, such as email, displaying notices on the district’s website, posting notifications on various social media channels, and non-technology based notification strategies, such as newsletters, lunch and learn opportunities for parents, posting flyers in the front office/lobby, or distributing newsletters to parents, 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. GLC will ensure that communication efforts are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community by using staff identified to serve as translators for bilingual families, providing tele-translation services when internal translators are unavailable, and hiring document translation services to ensure written material is provided in families first language.

GLC will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. GLC will also use the technology and non-technology communication modes described above to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial assessment reports.

**Nutrition**

***School Meals***

GLC is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams *trans* fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer’s specification); and to meeting the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of school children, 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 GLC schools participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). All schools within the District are committed to offering school meals through the applicable federal child nutrition programs, that:

* Are accessible to all students;
* Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
* Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations.
* GLC offers reimbursable school meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/nutrition-standards-school-meals).
* Promote healthy food and beverage choices using the “[Smarter Lunchroom” techniques](http://smarterlunchrooms.org/ideas):
* Displaying fruit instead of using chaffing dishes.
* Placing daily fruit options a location within the line of sight and reach of students.
* Prompting students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
* Facing the white milk in front of other beverages in all student refrigerators.
* Providing taste-testing opportunities and encouraging student feedback to inform menu development.
* Accommodating students with special dietary needs.
* Allowing a minimum of ten minutes for breakfast and twenty minutes for lunch, beginning when the student receives the meal and is seated, as required by the Healthy Schools Program Gold-level criteria.
* Serving lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
* Promoting participation in the federal lunch programs for families to improve knowledge of programs available in their children’s 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](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/CN2014-0130.pdf). These school nutrition personnel will refer to [USDA’s Professional Standards for School Nutrition Standards website](http://professionalstandards.nal.usda.gov/) to search for training that meets their learning needs.

***Water***

To promote hydration, GLC will make available free, safe, unflavored drinking water for all students throughout the school day\* and throughout every school campus\* (“school campus” and “school day” are defined in the glossary). GLC will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.

* *GLC submitted grants for bottle-filling water fountains to improve access to and safety of the water available. Three of the four programs were awarded a new bottle-filling station. A fourth bottle-filling station was purchased to ensure each school had the same access. Recently one of the stations was damaged beyond repair by a student during a behavioral crisis. Although the fountain has not yet been replaced, it has been submitted to the Infrastructure Team as an “Action Item”.*

***Competitive Foods and Beverages***

GLC is committed to ensuring all foods and beverages available to students on the school campus\* during the school day\* support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (e.g., “competitive” foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum.

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 students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards. These standards will apply in all locations and to all services where foods and beverages are sold, including the school stores and snack/food carts.

***Celebrations and Rewards***

All foods offered on the school campus will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards including through:

* Celebrations and parties: GLC will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas.
* Classroom snacks brought by parents: GLC will provide parents with a [list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks](https://www.healthiergeneration.org/live_healthier/eat_healthier/alliance_product_navigator/browse_products/?product_category_id=720) nutrition standards.
* Behavior Reinforcers and Incentives: GLC will limit the use of food as a primary reinforcer or behavioral incentive for students unless the BCBA determines there are few alternatives available to provide enough motivational properties to change the student’s target behavior. In these instances, the BCBA will complete a preference assessment in effort to identify alternative levels of reinforcers. Behavioral goals will be established for the student’s team to systematically increase the repertoire of reinforcers available.

***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. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages across instructional environments within the school. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to students and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by school staff, teachers, parents, students and the community.

GLC will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students across all four school campuses, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. This promotion will occur through at least:

* Implementing at least ten or more evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](http://smarterlunchrooms.org/ideas); and
* Ensuring 100% of foods and beverages promoted to students meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Additional promotion techniques that the District and individual schools may use are available at <http://www.foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/>.

***Nutrition Education***

GLC will teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by all students. Schools will provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

* Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
* Is part of not only health education classes, but also integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences and elective subjects;
* Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits and school gardens;
* Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products and healthy food preparation methods;
* Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise); and
* Includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.

**Physical Activity**

Children and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. Schools will ensure that these varied physical activity opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education.Physical activity during the school day, including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks, and/or physical education, **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason. Staff will receive specialized training to implement individualized student behavior intervention plans. The training will be provided by the BCBA and will emphasize alternative tools and strategies to manage student behavior. Additionally, no student’s behavior intervention plan will include any strategies reducing the amount of physical activity offered in a given day. Any strategies related to physical activity will focus on increasing the amount of daily physical activity in which the student participates.

To the extent practicable, GLC will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe, and that equipment is available to students to be active. A Playground Assessment Checklist is included as a bi-monthly action item that each school-based HSW committee is required to complete. The results are summarized and shared with the agencywide HSW Committee for review. The Director of Infrastructure will conduct the necessary inspections and assign either the Student Services Manager or Health Safety Security Coordinator to complete the repairs.

***Physical Education***

GLC will provide students 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 students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits. All students will receive equal opportunities to participate in physical education classes. GLC will make necessary accommodations to improve access and ensure equitable participation for all students.

**Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness**

***Community Health Promotion and Family Engagement***

GLC 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 District will use technology and non-technology based communication modes to ensure all families are actively notified of opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

***Staff Wellness and Health Promotion***

GLC established a staff health and wellness initiative guided by the agency’s major medical healthcare provider to address staff wellness issues by prioritizing self-care, identifying and disseminating wellness resources, coordinating school and/or agency-wide health challenges, offering on-site vaccinations, and performing other functions to improve staff wellness in coordination with human resources staff. The School Services Manager assists the Human Resources Team with this initiative.

***Professional Learning***

When feasible, the District will offer annual professional learning opportunities and resources for staff to increase knowledge and skills about promoting healthy behaviors in the classroom and school (e.g., increasing the use of kinesthetic teaching approaches or incorporating nutrition lessons into math class). Professional learning will help District staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing district reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

**Glossary**

Extended School Day: the time during, before and afterschool that includes activities such as clubs, intramural sports, band and choir practice, drama rehearsals and more.

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

School Day: the time between midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

Triennial: recurring every three years.

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