



Gettysburg Montessori Charter School Wellness Policy

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Purpose

Gettysburg Montessori Charter School is committed to the optimal development of every student. Our school believes that for students 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.

This policy outlines our school'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 in our school have access to healthy foods throughout the school 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 before, during, and after school.
- Our school engages 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 our school in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits
- Our school maintains oversight, communication, and monitoring of this policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all students and staff in our school. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

Our school has a wellness committee that meets at least four 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 wellness policy.

Leadership

The CEO/Principal will facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and ensure our school complies with the policy. The designated official for oversight is: Dr. Faye Pleso CEO/Principal

Title/Relationship to our school	Role on Committee
PE/Health Teacher	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Nurse	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Board Member	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Parent	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Food Service Coordinator	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation
Assistant Principal	Assists in the evaluation of the wellness policy implementation

Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement

Implementation Plan

Our school will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of the wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions, and timelines specific to our 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.

The Wellness policy can be found at: <https://www.gettysburgmontessoricharter.org/student-parent-info/>

Recordkeeping

Our school will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy in the CEO's office. 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 our schools wellness policy.
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements.
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the local school wellness policy.
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of our schools wellness policy has been made available to the public.

Annual Notification of Policy

Our school 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. Our school will make this information available via the district website and/or district-wide communications. Our school will provide as much information as possible about our school nutrition environment. This will include a summary of our schools events or activities related to the wellness policy implementation. Annually, our school will publicize the name and contact information on how the public can get involved in the wellness committee.

Triennial Progress Assessments

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

- The extent to which our school is in compliance with the wellness policy.
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of our schools wellness policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is CEO/Principal, 717-334-1120.

The CEO/Principal will monitor our school's compliance with this wellness policy.

Our school will actively notify households/families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Community Involvement, Outreach and Communication

GMCS is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. Our school will actively communicate ways in which representatives of DWC 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.

GMCS 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.

GMCSI will use electronic mechanisms, such as newsletters, presentations to parents, or sending information home 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.

GMCS will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community and accomplished through means similar to other ways that our school is communicating important school information with parents.

GMCS will actively notify the public about the content of or any updates to the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. Our school will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

Nutrition

School Meals

Our school is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, 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. Our school 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.

Our school participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP). Our school is committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students
- Are appealing and attractive to children
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (Our school offers reimbursable school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards.)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using as many of the following Smarter Lunchroom Techniques:
 - Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options.
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
- Students will be allowed at least 10 minutes to eat breakfast and at least 20 minutes to eat lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal and are seated (meets Healthy Schools Program Gold-level criteria).
- Students are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.
- Participation in Federal child nutrition programs will be promoted among students and families to help ensure that families know what programs are available in their children's school.
- Our school will implement the following Farm to School activities (meets Healthy Schools Program Gold-level criteria):
 - Grade bands will host field trips to local farms.
 - Agriculture and nutrition are incorporated into the learning environment through letters to farmers, nutrition education, and Ag Lab days.

Water

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all students throughout the school day. Our school will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes.

- Water cups/jugs will be available in the cafeteria if a drinking fountain is not present.
- All water sources will be maintained on a regular basis to ensure good hygiene and health safety standards. Such sources and containers may include drinking fountains, water jugs, and other methods for delivering drinking water.
- Students will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

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.

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 throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.

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.

Our school will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in school meal programs. The promotion will occur through at least:

- Ensuring food and beverages promoted to students meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.
- Implementing evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal program by using the PDE School Nutrition Programs resources found on PEARS.

Nutrition Education Goals

Our school will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all students. We 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 studies, and elective subjects.
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods.
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise).
- Links with school meal programs, cafeteria nutrition promotion activities, farm to school programs, and other foods and nutrition-related community services.
- Includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.
- Includes lessons and activities that are age-appropriate and will provide all students with the knowledge and skills needed to make healthy choices.

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- Includes nutrition education training for teachers and other staff.
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Competitive Foods and Beverages

Our school is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to students on our school's 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.

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.

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 through 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 USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards including through:

1. Celebrations and parties - GMCS will provide a list of non-food celebration birthday and party ideas to families and staff. Our school provides a list of healthy celebration and party ideas.
2. Classroom snacks brought in by parents should follow the Smart Snack nutrition standards and our school will provide a list of smart snacks for parents.
3. Rewards and incentives - Our school will provide teachers and school staff with a list of alternative ways to reward children. Foods and beverages will not be withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.
4. Unhealthy food and beverages will not be allowed for celebrations or special events.

As a reminder, candy should not be sent to school for snacks, lunch, or special events.

Physical Activity

Our school will provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate physical activity during the school day for all students. Our school will provide students with at least 60 minutes of age-appropriate physical activity on all or most days of the week that is designed to achieve optimal health, wellness, fitness, and performance benefits. Our school will also provide physical activity opportunities that meet the needs and interests of all students.

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to recess, classroom physical activity breaks or physical education) will not be withheld as punishment for any reason.

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

Physical Education

Our school will provide students with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with 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, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts.

All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in physical education classes. Our school will make appropriate accommodations to allow for equitable participation for all students and will adapt physical education classes and equipment as necessary.

Elementary students in each grade will receive physical education for at least 60 minutes per week throughout the school year.

Our school's physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments.

- Students will be moderately to vigorously active for at least 50% of class time during most or all physical education class sessions.
- All physical education teachers will be required to participate in at least once a year professional development in education.
- Students will be observed throughout physical education classes for assessment purposes.
- All physical education classes are taught by licensed teachers who are certified.

Health Education

Health education will be required in all grades and will be implemented into the physical education class that follows the Pennsylvania Health and Safety Standards.

Recess (Elementary)

Our school will offer at least 20 minutes of recess on all days during the school year (This policy may be waived on early dismissal or late arrival days). If recess is offered before lunch, schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms located just inside/outside the cafeteria to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating. Hand-washing time, as well as time to put away coats/hats/gloves, will be built into the recess transition period/time frame before students enter the cafeteria.

Outdoor recess will be offered when weather is feasible for outdoor play. Students will be allowed outside for recess except when outdoor temperature is above 95F or below 25F inclusive of wind chill factors, or during storms with lightning or thunder, or at the discretion of the building administrator based on his/her best judgment of safety conditions.

In the event that the school or district must conduct indoor recess, teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for students, to the extent practicable.

Indoor recess guidelines: Must be at least 20 minutes and involve some sort of physical activity.

Recess will complement, not substitute, physical education class. Recess monitors or teachers will encourage students to be active, and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Classroom Physical Activity Goal

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

Our school provides resources and links to resources, tools, and technology with ideas for classroom physical activity breaks.

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.

Our school will support classroom teachers by incorporating physical activity and employing kinesthetic learning approaches into core subjects by providing annual professional development opportunities and resources, including information on leading activities, activity options, as well as making available background material on the connections between learning and movement.

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

Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

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

Our school 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.

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 DWC/SWC.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy guidelines. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

Community Partnerships

Our school will develop relationships with community partners 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 Family Engagement Goal

Our school 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.

Our school will use electronic mechanisms (e.g., email or displaying notices on our schools Facebook page), as well as non-electronic mechanisms, (e.g, 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.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

Our school will implement strategies to support staff in actively promoting and modeling healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. Once a month, our school will email all staff about tips on how they can be physically active and eat healthy.

Professional Learning

When feasible, our school 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 school staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing school reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.