

Great Hearts Texas Wellness Policy

Sec. 1. WELLNESS

Great Hearts Texas shall follow nutrition guidelines that advance student health and reduce childhood obesity and shall promote the general wellness of all students by implementing measurable goals to promote sound nutrition and health through nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities.

Sec. 2. DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL WELLNESS PLAN

The school wellness council (“SWC”), as designated by the superintendent, shall review and consider evidence-based strategies and techniques and to develop nutrition guidelines and wellness goals as required by law. In developing, implementing, and reviewing the guidelines and goals of the local wellness plan, the SWC will allow participation by parents; students; representatives of Great Hearts’ food service personnel; Great Hearts’ physical education teachers, campus and/or district-level administrators, and school health professionals; Board members; and community members.

The SWC shall develop a wellness plan to implement Great Hearts’ nutrition guidelines and goals. The local wellness plan must address, at a minimum:

1. Strategies for soliciting involvement by and input from individuals interested in the wellness plan and policy;
2. Activities, benchmarks, and objectives for implementing wellness goals;
3. Methods for measuring implementation of wellness goals;
4. Great Hearts’ standards for foods and beverages provided (but not sold) to students during the school day and while on campus; and
5. Methods for communicating to the public information about Great Hearts’ local wellness plan.

The SWC will review and revise the wellness plan on a regular basis (at least once per semester) and recommend revisions to the plan when necessary.

Sec. 3. NUTRITION GUIDELINES

Great Hearts’ nutrition guidelines for reimbursable school meals and other foods and beverages sold or marketed to students during the school day will be designed to promote student health and reduce childhood obesity and shall be at least as restrictive as federal regulations and guidance, except when Great Hearts allows an exemption for allowable fundraising activities.

Meals served through the district's food services program shall comply with the National School Lunch and/or Breakfast standards for meal patterns, nutrient levels, and calorie requirements for the ages/grade levels served.¹

- Meal Service: All schools will provide breakfast through the USDA School Breakfast Program and lunch through the National School Lunch Program. Our reimbursable meals will follow the dietary guidelines defined by the Department of Texas Agriculture.
- School meals are made attractive to students and schedules are designed to encourage participation in school meal programs.
- Soda will not be available on school grounds.
- No competitive meals or a la carte items will be sold (or no access to them through indirect sales will be provided) to students during mealtimes unless they meet the Smart Snacks requirements.
- Nutritional Information: Nutrition information and guidelines for all foods and beverages served will be readily available to parents and students on the website.
- Water: Students and staff will have access to free, safe, and fresh drinking water throughout the school day. Water fountains or water filling stations are available in all cafeterias.
- A la carte
 - Food providers will be sensitive to the school environment (logos on campus).
 - Nutrition information for products offered is readily available near the point of purchase.
 - It is the policy of the Great Hearts that all foods and beverages sold to students during the school day on any property under the jurisdiction of the district will meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) school meal and Smart Snacks in School (Smart Snacks) nutrition standards.
- Vending Machines: No vending machines will be available to students on campus.
- Concession Stands, outside of the school day: Foods otherwise restricted by the USDA policy are permitted at concession stands that open at least 30 minutes after the last bell.

¹ See <https://squaremeals.org/Programs/NationalSchoolLunchProgram/PolicyARM.aspx> and Smart Snacks Calculator: <https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/calculator/>.

- **Fundraisers:**
 - Smart Snacks nutrition standards apply to all foods and beverages sold to students through district-sponsored fundraisers unless an exemption applies. ALL food and beverages sold during mealtimes MUST meet the Smart Snacks standards, regardless of exemption status.
 - Each school will be allowed to hold 6 designated exempt fundraisers per school year during which any food or beverages may be sold (except during mealtimes).
 - Encourage non-food fundraising – read-a-thons, cookbook, used book sale, fun run, coupon books, raffles, silent auctions, etc.

- **Classroom Birthday Parties:** Foods otherwise restricted by the USDA policy are permitted at student birthday parties. Parents may bring in one food item for the class to eat at snack time or other designated time and should NOT be served during mealtimes (unless the food item meets Smart Snacks requirements). Teachers should encourage parents to bring “mini” versions of treats whenever possible (i.e., “mini” cupcakes instead of a full-sized cupcake.)

- **Classroom Celebrations (literary, quarter, etc.):** Foods otherwise restricted by the USDA policy are permitted at classroom celebrations. Teachers are encouraged to use this unique opportunity to introduce and promote healthy options. Teachers should provide parents and the Director of Campus Operations a list of all items that will be served to the students.

- Beverages containing caffeine can only be available on high school campuses.

- **Rewards:** Teachers are strongly encouraged to not use food as a reward. We recommend staff use physical activity as a reward when feasible (like extra recess, class outside), or other non-food rewards (such as stickers, treasure box, “no homework” pass, etc.).

- **Marketing:** Any school-based marketing shall be consistent with Smart Snacks nutrition standards. Every effort will be made to select materials free of brand names/logos and illustrations of unhealthy foods. This includes all marketing – cafeteria, posters, educational materials, media, sports equipment, etc.

Sec. 4. WELLNESS GOALS

a) *Nutrition Education and Promotion*

Great Hearts shall implement, in accordance with law, a coordinated health program in grades K-8, with a nutrition education component and shall use a state approved health course curriculum that emphasizes the importance of proper nutrition. This program will encourage participation in the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, and any other

supplemental nutrition and food programs offered by Great Hearts, as well as provide the knowledge and skills necessary to promote health.

All staff with roles in the meal program will have the required number of training hours for their positions according to TDA requirements in [Section 27 of the ARM](#).

Great Hearts shall participate in the Federal Free & Reduced Meal program to encourage meal participation and ensure student access to healthy foods. Great Hearts will have systems in place that promote and process FRL applications, ensure a child's eligibility status is not disclosed at any point in the process of providing free or reduced-price meals, including notification of the availability of free or reduced-price benefits, certification and notification of eligibility, provision of meals in the cafeteria, and the point of service. Each campus will have a Negative Balance Policy that protects the student socially, emotionally, and physically, while still allowing the student to have access to the current menu or an alternate, nutritious meal.

Great Hearts establishes the following goals for nutrition education and promotion:

1. GH food service staff, teachers, and other personnel shall consistently promote healthy nutrition messages in cafeterias, classrooms, and other appropriate settings, as well as the participation in the school meal programs.
2. Students will receive nutrition education that fosters the adoption and maintenance of healthy eating behaviors and the understanding of how a student's environment affects their nutrition and health.
3. Educational nutrition information and the Free & Reduced Meal program will be directly shared with families (through email) and the general public (through the Great Hearts website) to positively influence the health of students and community members.

b) *Physical Activity*

Great Hearts shall implement, in accordance with law, a written, coordinated health program with physical education and physical activity components and shall offer at least the amount of physical activity for all grades required by the Texas Education Code or Commissioner Rule. Schools will provide physical education that fosters lifelong habits of physical activity.

State standards for physical activity are as follows:

- Students in grades K-5 receive 135 minutes of Physical activity per week.
- Students in grades 6-8 receive 225 minutes of Physical activity every 2 weeks.
- Students in grades 9-12 must earn at least 1.0 PE credit to satisfy graduation requirements.

Great Hearts will ensure that all PE instructors and coaches will have the proper education and training and professional development specific to physical education to ensure the health and

safety of the students. All school staff members shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity behavior.

Great Hearts may not allow students to be exempt or substitute other athletic activities for required physical education class time or credit, except for circumstances where:

1. A student is unable to participate in the required physical activity because of illness or disability; or
2. A middle or junior high school student participates in an extracurricular activity with a moderate or vigorous physical activity component that is considered a structured activity under rules adopted by the Commissioner of Education.

Great Hearts also may not allow students to be exempt or substitute other non-athletic activities for required physical education class time or credit, except as allowed by applicable law.

In addition, Great Hearts establishes the following goals for physical activity:

1. Great Hearts will provide an environment that fosters safe and enjoyable fitness activities for all students, including those who are not participating in competitive sports.
2. Great Hearts will encourage teachers to integrate physical movement into the academic curriculum where appropriate.
3. Great Hearts will make appropriate before and/or after school physical activity programs available and will encourage student participation.
4. Great Hearts will encourage parents to support their children's participation, to be active role models, and to include physical activity in family events.

c) *Other School-Based Activities*

Great Hearts establishes the following goals for creating an environment conducive to healthy nutrition and physical activity and to promote a consistent wellness message to the school community:

1. Great Hearts shall allow sufficient time for students to eat meals in facilities that are clean, comfortable, and safe.
2. Great Hearts shall promote employee wellness activities and involvement at suitable school activities.

Sec. 5. IMPLEMENTATION

The Superintendent or designee shall oversee the implementation of this policy and the development of the local wellness plan and appropriate administrative procedures related to this wellness policy.

Sec. 6. EVALUATION

Great Hearts shall comply with federal requirements for evaluating this policy and the wellness plan. Great Hearts' compliance with the local wellness plan shall be assessed at least once every three years (Triennial Assessment). The Superintendent or designee shall conduct the assessment, which will consider:

1. The extent to which each school is in compliance with the local school wellness policy;
2. The extent to which the local school wellness policy aligns with model local school wellness policies; and
3. A description of the progress made toward attaining the goals described in the local wellness plan.

Sec. 7. PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

Great Hearts must annually inform and update the public about the content and implementation of this wellness policy, and make the policy and any updates, along with the local wellness plan and program assessments, available to the public.

Sec. 8. RECORDS RETENTION

Great Hearts shall retain all the required records associated with the wellness policy as required by law² and Great Hearts' record management program. *42 U.S.C. 1758b, 7 C.F.R. Part 210.*

² Great Hearts may refer to the Texas Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Division's "Administrator's Reference Manual (ARM)" for the School Nutrition Program for guidance on record retention requirements.