



Girls Athletic Leadership School Los Angeles Local School Wellness Policy

Girls Athletic Leadership School Los Angeles (“GALS” or the “School”) takes a holistic stance to development that recognizes the deep connection between a healthy mind and a healthy body. Through the integration of a health and wellness curriculum addressing the physical, emotional, and psychosocial needs of female adolescent development, GALS balances the goal of building strong minds and bodies with the opportunity for students to garner the skill set to emerge as leaders of their own lives.

The purpose of the GALS Local School Wellness policy is to outline the organization’s goals for nutrition education, movement and other school-based activities that are designed to promote student wellness. This policy also aims to outline nutrition guidelines for all food available on campus, with the objective of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity. Finally, this document provides a plan for measuring implementation and adherence to the wellness policy.

I. Wellness Policy Development

Wellness Committee Role and Membership

GALS will convene a representative Wellness Committee (“Well-Com”), or work within an existing school health 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 Policy.

Well-Com membership will represent all grade levels and include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: parents and caregivers; students; representatives of the school nutrition program (e.g., school nutrition director); school health professionals (e.g., health education teachers, school health services staff, and mental health and social services staff; school administrators; and the general public. When possible, membership will also include Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) coordinators.

Leadership

The Executive Director or designee(s) will convene the Well-Com and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and will ensure each school’s compliance with the policy.

Additionally, the designated official for oversight of the Well-Com is:

Carrie Wagner
Executive Director



8015 Van Nuys Blvd
Panorama City, CA 91402
818-389-1184
cwagner@galsla.org

Implementation Plan

Using the steps outlined below, GALS will ensure the School meets legal obligations regarding implementation of this Policy.

This Policy and the progress reports can be found at: www.galsla.org.

Recordkeeping

GALS will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of this policy in the main office. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written Policy;
- Documentation demonstrating that the Policy has been made available to the public;
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements;
- Documentation of the triennial assessment of the Policy; and
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the Policy has been made available to the public.

Annual Notification of Policy

GALS 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. GALS will make this information available via the School website and/or School-wide communications. GALS will provide as much information as possible about the School nutrition environment. This will include a summary of School's events or activities related to Policy implementation.

Annually, GALS will also publicize the name and contact information of the School official(s) leading and coordinating the Well-Com, as well as information on how the public can get involved with the Well-Com.

Triennial Progress Assessments

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

- The extent to which GALS is in compliance with this Policy;



- The extent to which the School’s policy compares to model wellness policies; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the Wellness Policy.
- Results of California Department of Education nutrition reviews.
- Results of the State’s physical fitness test.
- Student participation rates in school meal programs.
- Feedback from school personnel, parents/guardians, students, and other appropriate persons.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is:

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The Well-Com [Executive Director] will monitor the School’s compliance with this Policy. Any school stakeholder wishing to express a viewpoint, opinion, or complaint regarding these rules is encouraged to contact the Executive Director.

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

Revisions and Updating the Policy

GALS will update or modify this Policy based on the results of the annual School Health Index and triennial assessments and/or as 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. **This Policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.**

Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications

GALS is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. GALS will actively communicate ways in which representatives of Well-Com and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of this Policy through a variety of means. GALS 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.



GALS will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the School's website, as well as non-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 this Policy, as well as how to get involved and support the Policy. GALS will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community, and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the district and individual schools are communicating important School information with parents.

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

II. Healthy Foods and Beverages

School Meals

GALS participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and *[include here any additional Federal child nutrition programs in which the district participates, possibly including the Fresh Fruit & Vegetable Program (FFVP), Special Milk Program (SMP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Supper programs, or others]*. The School also operates additional nutrition-related programs and activities including *[if applicable, insert here a list of other programs such as Farm to School programs, school gardens, Breakfast in the Classroom, Mobile Breakfast carts, Grab 'n' Go Breakfast, or others]*. The 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. (The School offers reimbursable school meals that meet USDA nutrition standards.)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using at least ten of the following Smarter Lunchroom techniques:
 - Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chaffing dishes or hotel pans).
 - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily.
 - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of students.



- All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names.
- Daily vegetable options are bundled into all grab-and-go meals available to students.
- All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
- White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers.
- Alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on posters or signs within all service and dining areas.
- A reimbursable meal can be created in any service area available to students (e.g., salad bars, snack rooms, etc.).
- Student surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor and promotional ideas.
- Student artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas.
- Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options.

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All School nutrition 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.

Water

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

III. Nutrition Education and Standards

The primary goal of nutrition education is to increase students' knowledge regarding healthy eating choices to enable them to adopt healthy eating behaviors. All students shall receive nutrition education that is aligned with the California Health Education Content Standards and current legislation.

Instruction shall be age-appropriate, based on accurate and current information, and provide the skills and motivation to focus on behavior change. Students shall receive consistent nutrition messages throughout the school campus.

Nutrition education will also be made available to parents/guardians and the community in a variety of formats (e.g., handouts, the parent newsletter, wall or bulletin board posters or banners, postings on the GALS website, community presentations, etc.).



IV. Nutrition Standards

Competitive Foods and Beverages

GALS is committed to ensuring that 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. 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, à la carte options in cafeterias, vending machines, school stores and snack or food carts.

The Board shall adopt nutrition guidelines for all foods available on campus during the school day, with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity. Foods and beverages provided through federally reimbursable school meal programs shall meet or exceed federal regulations.

Foods and beverages available to students at GALS should support the health curriculum and promote optimal health. Nutrition standards adopted by GALS for all foods and beverages sold to students during the school day including foods and beverages provided through the school’s food service program, fundraisers, and other venues, shall meet or exceed State and Federal nutrition standards.

The GALS Healthy Snack Policy encourages students to make nutritious food choices for lunches and snacks brought to school. Guidelines for snacks allow include yogurt, nuts, fruit, vegetables, and granola bars. Candy, cookies, sugared juices (including sports drinks), and junk foods are prohibited.

Celebrations and Rewards

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

1. Celebrations and parties. GALS will provide a list of healthy party ideas to parents and teachers, including non-food celebration ideas.
2. Classroom snacks brought by parents. GALS will provide to parents a list of foods and beverages that meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards.



3. Rewards and incentives. GALS will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a list of alternative ways to reward children. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

Notices shall be sent to parents/guardians either separately or as part of a school newsletter, reminding them of the necessity of providing healthy treats for students and/or encouraging the use of non-food treats for classroom parties. Birthday celebrations and after-school celebrations including sugary treats will be limited to once a month.

Fundraising

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the GALS campus beginning 30 minutes after school, and shall be subject to the approval of Well-Com. GALS will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas.

GALS shall encourage healthy fundraisers as alternatives to fundraising that involve selling food items of limited nutritional value, such as candy, cupcakes, or sugary beverages. As an example, a grade-level fundraising project would sell healthy food items or non-food items such as candles, wrapping paper, greeting cards, jewelry, etc.

Nutrition Promotion

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

- Implementing at least ten evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using Smarter Lunchroom techniques described above; and
- Ensuring 100% of foods and beverages promoted to students meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to students on the school campus during the school day will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards such that only those foods that comply with or exceed those nutrition standards are permitted to be marketed or promoted to students.

As the Executive Director reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by this Policy.



V. Movement

Morning Movement

One of GALS' foundational values is a focus on the health and wellness and daily movement needs of our students. The Centers for Disease Control ("CDC") recommends that all children and adolescents participate in a minimum of sixty (60) minutes of physical activity every day. The CDC recommends that aerobic activity make up the bulk of such physical activity, with vigorous-intensity aerobic activity on at least three days per week. The CDC also recommends that physical activity include muscle strengthening activities, such as gymnastics or push-ups, on at least three days per week, and bone strengthening activities like jumping rope or running at least three days per week.

In California, as in the rest of the country, teenaged girls are less physically active than teenaged boys.¹ Not only does physical activity have positive, cognitive effects on academic achievement, but becoming active is also an essential part of the self-development process and a particularly salient issue for adolescent girls. Some of the distinct benefits of engaging in physical activity for women include an enhanced body image, self-esteem, and sense of confidence.¹ In addition, female athletes and girls who exercise regularly are less likely to be sexually active and to become pregnant.² Notably, middle school is the most common time for the introduction of healthy behaviors for most adolescent girls.

At GALS, all students and teachers engage in physical activity as their first period of the day in order to optimize the effects that it has on the brain. As illustrated by the successful model at GALS as well as Naperville Central (IL) High School, students find drastic improvements in their academic achievement when they participate in physical education before their most difficult classes.³

Active Pedagogy

Beyond the morning movement at GALS, our teachers also implement active pedagogy throughout the instructional day. Teachers use brain breaks, breathing techniques, and other action-based instructional tools and pedagogies to help students focus and optimize their learning potential.

When feasible, GALS 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 staff understand the connections between

¹ President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. *Physical Activity & Sport in the Lives of Girls*. 1997

² T. Dodge, T. , and J. Jaccard. "Participation in athletics and female sexual risk behavior: The evaluation of four causal structures." *Journal of Adolescent Research*. 17: 42-67.

³ Naperville Central High School and PE4Life. www.learningreadinesspe.com



academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing district reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

VI. Other School Based Activities Designed to Promote Student Wellness

GALS shall create a healthy school environment that promotes healthy eating and physical activity by integrating wellness activities across the entire School setting. In order to create this environment, GALS shall 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.

Specific activities designed to integrate wellness into the school setting include the following:

- Provide a clean, safe, enjoyable meal environment for students
- Ensure that students can get water and encourage students to bring water bottles
- Discourage the use of food as a reward or punishment
- Provide opportunities for on-going professional training and development and teachers in the areas of nutrition and physical education
- Encourage parents/guardians, teachers, school administrators, students and community members to serve as role models in practicing healthy eating and being physically active, both in school and at home
- Provide information and outreach materials about other Food and Nutrition Service programs such as Food Stamps, and Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to students and parents/guardians, encourage all students to participate in school meal programs, (i.e., the National School Lunch, including snacks for After School Program, and School Breakfast programs)

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 this Policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the Well-Com [parents] and the community.

All School-sponsored events will adhere to this Policy's wellness guidelines. All School-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

Community Partnerships

GALS will cultivate relationships with community partners (e.g., hospitals, universities/colleges, local businesses, SNAP-Ed providers and coordinators, etc.) in support of this Policy's implementation. Existing and new community partnerships and sponsorships will be evaluated to ensure that they are consistent with this Policy and its goals.



Legal References

The following laws and regulations have informed the GALs Wellness Policy:

- Federal Child Nutrition and Women, Infants and Children Act of 2004
- Child Nutrition Act of 1996
- California Education Code
- California Code of Regulations, Title 5
- United States Code, Title 42
- Code of Federal Regulations, Title 7