



## **Wellness Policy**

SY2025-2026

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## Genesis Innovation Wellness Policy

### Preamble

Genesis Innovation Academy (hereto referred to as GIA) is committed to the optimal development of every scholar. GIA believes that for scholars 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.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition, and physical activity before, during, and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive scholar outcomes. For example, scholar 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.<sup>1,2,3,4,5,6,7</sup> Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among scholars.<sup>8,9,10</sup> In addition, scholars 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.<sup>11,12,13,14</sup>

This policy outlines the GIA's approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all scholars 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:

GIA scholars 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.

- Scholars receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors.
- Scholars have opportunities to be physically active before, during, and after school.
- GIA will engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness.
- GIA's staff is 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 GIA in creating continuity between school and other settings for scholars and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits.
- GIA establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

GIA will coordinate the wellness policy with other aspects of school management, including GIA's School Improvement Plan, when appropriate.

## I. Genesis Innovation Academy Wellness Committee

### *Committee Role and Membership*

Genesis Innovation Academy wellness committee will convene a representative wellness committee that meets at least two 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 district-level wellness policy (heretofore referred as “wellness policy”).

GIA’s Wellness Membership committee will represent elementary, middle and high school girls and boys and include, (to the extend if possible) but not limited to parents and guardians, scholar’s representatives of the school nutrition program (ex., nutrition manager); physical education teachers, health education teachers, school counselor, school administrators, school board members and the public. GIA’s Wellness Committee will include representatives from the elementary school, middle school, high school, and community.

Due to our unique school structure, separated by gender along with being a charter school, Genesis innovation Academy will establish an ongoing School Wellness Committee (SWC) that convenes to review school-level issues for elementary, middle, and high school divisions.

### *Leadership*

The Superintendent or designee(s) will convene the Genesis Innovation Academy Wellness Committee and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy and will ensure GIA’s compliance with the policy.

Name	Title	Email address	Role
Julia Neal	Enrollment Coordinator	Jneal@giacademy.org	Assistant Coordinator
Renetta Dees	Girls School Principal	Rdees@giacademy.org	Administrative Staff
Tracy Dubose	Boys School Principal	Tdubose@giacademy.org	Administrative Staff
Ebonie Fagin	Nutrition Manager/Health & Wellness Manager	Efagin@giacademy.org	Coordinator
Ronnalyn Simmonds	Staff Member	Rsimmonds@giacademy.org	Staff Member
Robert Green	Boys Academy P.E Teacher	Rgreen@giacademy.org	Boys Sub-committee
Kandis Roach	Girls Academy P.E	Kroach@giacademy.org	Girls Sub-committee

Aubrie Johnson	Student		Scholar
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GIA will designate a school wellness policy coordinator, who will ensure compliance with the policy. Refer to Appendix A for a list of school level wellness policy coordinators.

## **II. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Community Engagement**

### ***Implementation Plan***

GIA will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, and actions, as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available on the school campus, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.

This wellness policy can be found at: [www.Genesisinnovationacademy.org](http://www.Genesisinnovationacademy.org).

### ***Recordkeeping***

GIA will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy at the Genesis Innovation Academy Administrative Offices, and/or on Genesis Innovation Academy's Admin Drive on the computer network.

### ***Annual Review***

GIA will review its Wellness Policy twice per year. The annual review will be published around the same time each year in the month of August and will include updated information.

### ***Revisions and Updating the Policy***

GIA will update or modify the Wellness Policy based on the results of the annual review and/or as GIA 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.

### ***Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications***

GIA is committed to incorporating community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. GIA will 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. GIA will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the district'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 notified of the content of and updates to the wellness policy.

## **III. Nutrition**

### ***School Meals***

GIA is committed to serving healthy meals to scholars with fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and zero grams trans-fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meet the nutrition needs of scholars within their calorie requirements. Our school meal program aims to improve the diet and health of GIA's scholars, 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.

GIA scholars will participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), and the Seamless Summer Program. GIA is committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that

- Are accessible to all scholars.
- Are appealing and attractive to children.
- Are served in clean and pleasant setting.
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (GIA offers reimbursable school meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](#).)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using the following Smarter Lunchroom techniques:
  - Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls, Ziploc bags, baskets
    - Sliced or cut fruit is available daily
    - Daily fruit options are displayed in a location in the line of sight and reach of the scholars.
    - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt scholars 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 are available.

### ***Staff Qualifications and Professional Development***

Our school nutrition program director/ manager 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.

### ***Water***

To promote hydration, free, safe, unflavored drinking water will be available to all scholars throughout the school day. GIA will make drinking water available where school meals are served during mealtimes. In addition, scholars will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

### ***Competitive Foods and Beverages***

GIA is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to scholars on the school campus\* during the school day\* support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the school meal programs (i.e., “competitive” foods and beverages) will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. Smart Snacks aim to improve GIA’s scholar’s 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. A summary of the standards and information are available at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available at [www.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks](http://www.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks).

To support healthy food choices and improve GIA’s scholar’s health and well-being, all foods and beverages outside the reimbursable school meal programs that are sold to scholars 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, school stores, and snack or food carts.

### ***Fundraising***

Foods and beverages that meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards may be sold through fundraisers on the school campus\* during the school day\*. GIA will make available to parents and teachers a list of healthy fundraising ideas.

### ***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. Scholars and staff will receive nutrition messages throughout the year.

### ***Nutrition Education***

GIA aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by scholars. GIA will also provide nutrition education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide scholars with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health.
- Promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, and low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods.
- Emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise).

### ***Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education***

GIA will include in the health education curriculum the following essential topics on healthy eating:

- The relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Food guidance from [MyPlate](#)
- Reading and using USDA's food labels
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- Eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain *trans* fat
- Choosing foods and beverages with little added sugars
- Eating more calcium-rich foods
- Preparing healthy meals and snacks
- Risks of unhealthy weight control practices
- Accepting body size differences
- Food safety
- Importance of water consumption
- Importance of eating breakfast
- Making healthy choices when eating at restaurants
- Eating disorders
- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Reducing sodium intake
- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers, and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to nutrition and dietary behavior
- How to develop a plan and track progress toward achieving a personal goal to eat healthfully
- Resisting peer pressure related to unhealthy dietary behavior
- Influencing, supporting, or advocating for others' healthy dietary behavior

[USDA's Team Nutrition](#) provides free nutrition education and promotion materials, including standards-based nutrition education curricula and lesson plans, posters, interactive games, menu graphics, and more.

### ***Food and Beverage Marketing in Schools***

GIA is committed to providing a school environment that ensures opportunities for scholars to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day. We strive to teach our scholars how to make informed choices about nutrition, health, and physical activity. It is the intent of GIA to protect and promote our scholar's health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages that are permitted to be sold on the school campus, consistent with the GIA's Wellness Policy.

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to scholars on the school campus\* during the school day\* will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

## **IV. Physical Activity**

Activity during the school day will not be withheld as punishment for any reason.

To the extent practicable, GIA will ensure that its ground and facilities are safe, and that equipment is available to scholars to be active.

### ***Physical Education***

- GIA will provide scholars 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 scholars develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts.

### ***Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education***

GIA will include in the health education curriculum the following essential topics on physical activity:

- The physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Health-related fitness, that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- Differences between physical activity, exercise, and fitness
- Phases of an exercise session, that is, warm up, workout, and cool down
- Overcoming barriers to physical activity
- Decreasing sedentary activities, such as TV watching
- Opportunities for physical activity in the community
- Preventing injury during physical activity
- Weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia, and sunburn while being physically active
- How much physical activity is enough, that is, determining frequency, intensity, time, and type of physical activity
- Developing an individualized physical activity and fitness plan
- Monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan
- Dangers of using performance-enhancing drugs, such as steroids
- Social influences on physical activity, including media, family, peers, and culture
- How to find valid information or services related to physical activity and fitness
- How to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity

### ***Recess (Elementary)***

All elementary schools will offer at least **20 minutes of recess** on all or most days during the school year. 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 scholars 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/timeframe before scholars enter the cafeteria.

In the event of inclement weather GIA will make all reasonable attempts to conduct **indoor recess**. Teachers and staff will follow the indoor recess guidelines that promote physical activity for scholars, to the extent practicable.

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

#### ***Physical Activity Breaks (Elementary and Middle)***

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

GIA will provide resources and links to resources, tools, and technology with ideas for physical activity breaks. Resources and ideas are available through [USDA](#) and the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#).

#### ***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.

GIA will support classroom teachers 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 scholars whenever feasible.

#### ***Before and After School Activities***

GIA offers opportunities for scholars to participate in physical activity after the school day through a variety of methods. We will encourage scholars to be physically active after school by participating in clubs, physical activity in aftercare, and sports.

#### **V. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness**

GIA will promote health and wellness with extra-curricular opportunities that require physical activity and/or health education, which could include, but not limited to sports, martial arts,

scouting, running/fitness/aerobics clubs, etc. All efforts related to obtaining federal, state, or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy school environments will be complementary of the wellness policy.

### ***Community Health Promotion and Engagement***

GIA 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.

GIA will use electronic mechanisms (such as email or displaying notices on GIA'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 opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities and receive information about health promotion efforts.

### **References**

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