



**Galapagos Rockford Charter School
Wellness Policy 2021**

DRAFT (2-05-2021)

BELIEF STATEMENT

Galapagos Rockford Charter School (GRCS) is committed to providing a learning environment that supports and promotes wellness, good nutrition, and an active lifestyle and recognizes the positive relationship between good nutrition, physical activity and the capacity of scholars to develop and learn. The entire school environment shall be aligned with healthy school goals to positively influence scholars' beliefs and habits and promote health and wellness, good nutrition and regular physical activity. In addition, GRCS staff shall be encouraged to model healthy eating and physical activity as a valuable part of daily life.

INTENT

The purpose of this policy is to ensure an environment that promotes and supports scholar health and wellness, helps to reduce childhood obesity and meets the requirements of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 and the Illinois School Code, including, without limitation, goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities designed to promote scholar wellness; nutrition guidelines for all food available during the school day; a plan for measuring implementation including designating one or more persons charged with operational responsibility; and involving parents, scholars, school food service providers, the GRCS board, GRCS administrators, and the public in developing this policy.

RATIONALE

A disturbing number of American children are inactive, eat poorly and have developed poor wellness habits. As a result, over 16 percent of children and adolescents are overweight. This is a three-fold increase since 1980. In response to this, Congress passed the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 on June 30, 2004. This law requires local education agencies participating in a program authorized by the National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to develop a local wellness policy. The objectives of the wellness policy are to improve the school nutrition environment, promote student health and reduce childhood obesity. In addition, Public Act 094-0199 amends the Illinois School Code, requiring the Illinois State Board of Education to establish a state goal that all districts or charter schools acting as a SFA have a wellness policy.

The link between nutrition and learning is well documented. Healthy eating patterns are essential for scholars to achieve their full academic potential, full physical and mental growth and lifelong health and well-being. Healthy eating is demonstrably linked to reduced risk for development of many chronic diseases. GRCS has a responsibility to help scholars acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to establish and maintain lifelong healthy eating patterns. Well-planned and well-implemented wellness programs have been shown to positively influence children's health.

GRCS also has a responsibility to help scholars establish and maintain lifelong habits of being physically active. According to the U.S. Surgeon General, regular physical activity is one of the most important things people can do to maintain and improve their physical health, mental health, and overall well-being. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of premature death in general and of heart disease, high blood pressure, colon cancer, and diabetes.

GOALS FOR NUTRITION EDUCATION

- GRCS scholars in grades kindergarten through eighth shall receive nutrition education within a comprehensive wellness curriculum.

The program shall be designed to provide scholars with the knowledge and skills necessary to adopt healthy eating behaviors aimed at influencing scholars' knowledge, attitudes and eating habits. The curriculum shall be consistent with and incorporate relevant Illinois Learning Standards.

- GRCS will provide thirty contact hours of nutrition education opportunities to scholars each year. Contact hours may include a combination of classroom instruction; nutrition education provided in the cafeteria; or wellness fairs, field studies, tastings, school gardens and community circles providing nutrition education.

GOALS FOR PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- Scholars shall participate in physical education that enables them to achieve and maintain a high level of personal fitness; emphasizes self-management skills including energy balance (calories in minus calories out.) The curriculum shall be consistent with and incorporate relevant Illinois Learning Standards.⁵
- Emphasis shall be placed on promoting an active lifestyle as health habits are established at a young age. Accommodations shall be made for scholars with disabilities, 504 plans, and other limitations.
- Scholars shall be provided opportunities for physical activity through a range of before- and after-school programs including intramurals, interscholastic athletics, and physical activity programs.
- The physical education program shall actively encourage families as partners in providing physical activity beyond the school day.

GOALS FOR OTHER SCHOOL-BASED ACTIVITIES DESIGNED TO PROMOTE SCHOLAR WELLNESS

Parent Partnerships:

- GRCS shall support parents' efforts to provide a healthy diet and daily physical activity for their children.
- Parents shall be provided information to help them incorporate healthy eating and physical activity into their children's lives. This information may be provided in the form of handouts, postings on the GRCS website, information provided in newsletters, presentations that focus on nutrition and healthy lifestyles and any other appropriate means available for reaching parents.

Consistent School Activities and Environment – Healthy Eating:

- GRCS food providers shall share information about the nutritional content of school meals and/or individually sold foods with scholars, family and school staff.
- School meals shall be served in clean, safe and pleasant settings with adequate time provided for scholars to eat, at a minimum, in accordance with state and federal standards and guidelines.
- All food service personnel shall have adequate pre-service training and regularly participate in professional development activities that provide strategies for providing tasty, appealing and healthy school meals; nutrition education strategies including coordination of classroom and cafeteria activities; and effective promotional techniques to encourage healthy eating habits.
- Food providers shall involve families, scholars and other school personnel in choosing nutritious food and beverage selections for GRCS through surveys, committees, taste-testing and similar activities designed to provide input into the decision-making process.
- Food providers shall work with suppliers to obtain food and beverages that meet the nutrition requirements of school meals and nutrition standards for those sold individually.
- Food providers shall work closely with GRCS staff to reinforce nutrition instruction and foster an environment where scholars can learn about and practice healthy eating.

- Food providers shall take every measure to ensure that the scholars' access to food and beverages at GRCS meets federal, state and local laws and guidelines.
- Scholars, parents, school staff and community members bringing food and beverages shall be required to provide healthful options and shall be provided with a list of recommended food and beverage options that are permitted and not permitted (Attachment B).
- All food brought in for GRCS activities shall be obtained from sources that comply with all laws related to food and food labeling.
- School-based organizations shall be encouraged to raise funds through the sale of items other than food. Fund raisers involving food shall be limited and restricted to outside the school day. Food fund raisers will prohibit the sale of "junk food".
- Scholars are not permitted to leave school grounds to purchase food or beverages. Furthermore, parents are not permitted to bring in food from fast food vendors.
- GRCS shall make efforts to promote nutritious food and beverage choices consistent with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans and Food Guidance System (MyPyramid) such as fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy food and whole grain products.
- Nutrition education shall be provided by trained and well-supported staff with adequate pre-service and in-service training.
- All food and beverages made available on campus shall comply with the federal, state and local food safety and sanitation regulations.
- Access to any area involved in storage, preparation or service of food on the school campus shall be limited to authorized personnel (for the safety and security of food.)

Consistent School Activities and Environment –Physical Activity:

- Wellness education shall be provided by trained and well-supported staff; who impart the knowledge and skills needed to effectively promote enjoyable lifelong healthy eating and physical activity among scholars.
- The wellness education program shall be closely coordinated with the other components of the overall GRCS health programming. When appropriate, it is encouraged that wellness topics be integrated within other curricular areas.
- GRCS staff, when possible, will provide scholars with periodic breaks when activities such as mandatory testing make it necessary for scholars to be inactive for long periods of time. It is recommended that during such breaks scholars are encouraged to stand and be moderately active.
- GRCS will develop community partnerships with other child-serving organizations such as park districts and other groups to provide scholars with opportunities to be active.
- Physical activity facilities and equipment on school grounds shall be safe.
- GRCS will work with the community to create a community environment that is safe and supportive of scholars walking or biking to school.

Food or Physical Activity as a Reward or Punishment:

- School personnel shall be encouraged to use nonfood incentives or rewards with scholars and shall not withhold food from scholars as a consequence.
- School personnel shall not use physical activity as a punishment or withhold participation in wellness education class as a punishment.

NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR FOOD AND BEVERAGES AVAILABLE DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

- Food providers shall offer a variety of age-appropriate, appealing food and beverage choices and employ food preparation, purchasing and meal planning practices consistent with the current

Dietary Guidelines for Americans (e.g. provide a variety of fruits and vegetable choices; serve low-fat and fat-free dairy products; ensure that whole grain products are served).

- All food and beverages sold individually (apart from the reimbursable school meal) on school campuses during the school day shall meet nutrition standards (Attachment A).
- Nutritious and appealing food and beverages, such as fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy foods and whole grain products, shall be available wherever and whenever food is sold or otherwise offered at school.

GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL MEALS

- School meals served shall be consistent with the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and/or shall meet, at a minimum, the nutrition requirements and regulations for the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program and all applicable state and local laws and regulations.

MEASURING IMPLEMENTATION & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- The Campus Managers shall be charged with the operational responsibility for ensuring that GRCS meets the local wellness policy requirements.
- The CEO shall appoint a district wellness committee that includes parents, scholars, and representatives of the school food authority, the GRCS board, GRCS administrators, and the public to oversee development, implementation and evaluation of the wellness policy.
- The terms of district wellness committee members shall be staggered for continuity.
- The appointed district wellness committee shall be responsible for:
 - assessment of the current school environment;
 - development of a wellness policy;
 - measuring the implementation of the wellness policy; and
 - recommending revision of the policy, as necessary.
- The wellness committee, on an annual basis, shall recommend to the CEO any recommended revisions to the policy.

Attachment A

Food or Beverage	<p>HealthierUS School Challenge Nutrition Standards*</p> <p>These criteria focus on decreasing fat and added sugar, increasing nutrient density, and moderating portion size.</p>
Fruits and Non-fried Vegetables	<p>Fruits and vegetables may be fresh, frozen, canned or dried, and they must be found in the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs.</p> <p>http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/FBG/2003FBG/%20Section%202.pdf</p> <p>Examples of products that <i>cannot</i> be sold/served as a fruit or vegetable include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snack-type food made from vegetables or fruits, such as potato chips, and banana chips; • Pickle relish, jam, jelly; and • Tomato catsup and chili sauce
Approved Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flavored or plain reduced fat (2%), low-fat (1%), skim/nonfat fluid milk meeting state and local standards for pasteurized fluid milk and/or USDA approved alternative dairy beverages¹; • 100% full-strength fruit and vegetable juices; and • Water (non-flavored, non-sweetened, <i>and</i> non-carbonated)
Any Other Individual Food Sales/Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calories from total fat must be at or below 35%**, <i>excluding nuts, seeds, and nut butters</i>. This is determined by dividing the calories from total fat by the total calories and multiplying by 100. If calories from fat are not available, multiply the grams of fat by 9 to equal calories from fat. • Calories from saturated fat must be at or below 10%. This is determined by dividing the calories from saturated fat by the total calories and multiplying by 100. If calories from saturated fat are not available, multiply grams of saturated fat by 9 to equal calories from saturated fat. • Total sugar must be at or below 35% by weight. This is determined by dividing the grams of total sugar by the gram weight of the product and multiplying by 100. This includes both naturally occurring and added sugars. This limit does not include fruits and vegetables or flavored milk as defined above. • Portion size for a la carte sales in the school cafeteria are not to exceed the serving size of the food served in the National School Lunch Program/School Breakfast Program; for vending sales the item package or container is not to exceed 200 calories.

¹ There are no USDA approved alternative dairy beverages at this time. Public Law 108-265 (Child Nutrition Program Reauthorization) authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to establish nutritionally equivalent non-dairy beverages by July 1, 2005. Please check with the Illinois State Board of Education for clarification.

*The above *Nutrition Standards* are criteria for sales/service of a la carte and/or vended items from the United States Department of Agriculture's *HealthierUS School Challenge*. Please be aware that these criteria are only meant to apply to individually sold food and that food sold as part of a reimbursable school meal may not necessarily meet these criteria although menus meet the nutrition standards set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture for school meals. Local policy makers may wish to modify the standards but should be aware that this may make schools ineligible to meet the criteria for the *HealthierUS School Challenge*.

**The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005* recommend a total fat intake of 20 to 35% for school-age children.



Galapagos Rockford food guidelines to of promote healthy, productive college-bound scholars

Clues to help avoid certain foods	
Foods high in sugars Foods high in high fructose corn syrup Foods or drinks that promote "real juice flavor" Enriched flour	
Not Allowed	Welcomed
<p>Common Culprits: Hawaiian Punch, Sunny Delight</p> <p>Capri Sun, Gatorade, Powerade, soft drinks</p> <p>Common Culprits: candy, cookies and chips, cheetos, doritos, goldfish etc.</p> <p>Common Culprits: Gogurt, Trix yogurt, fruit snacks, fruit by the foot</p> <p>Common Culprits: sugary cereals (including but not limited to Captain Crunch, Trix etc, Pop-Tarts</p> <p>Common Culprits: "Lunchables" that include Nachos, Pizza, Candy, Cookies, Capri Sun</p>	<p>Good Alternatives: Water, 100% Juice, milk water, water, water</p> <p>Good Alternatives: Nuts, rice cakes, carrots, salad, pita bread/hummus, grapes string cheese, low sodium crackers Pretzels</p> <p>Good Alternatives: plain yogurt, fruit yogurt carrots, celery, bananas, oranges, berries, apples, grapes, raisins, craisins, dried fruit, cucumbers</p> <p>Good Alternatives: bagels, Kashi cereal</p> <p>"Lunchables" that include meat, cheese, and crackers only.</p> <p>Good Alternatives: A sandwich with whole wheat bread</p>

Letter Sent to Parents Regarding Food Policy

August 24, 2020

Dear Galapagos Parents and Guardians:

Galapagos has always believed that healthy eating is a crucial component in the development and education of our scholars. Since our founding in 2009, Galapagos has been the only school in Rockford to ban “junk food”. Slowly, the rest of the city and the nation have begun to follow our lead. In January of this year, we took another giant leap forward by removing traditional cafeteria foods, provided by RPS, in favor of healthy food options. In partnership with our new food vendor, Gourmet Gorilla, Galapagos is able to provide breakfasts and lunches that are healthier for our scholars and our environment. The food is fresh, mostly organic and, whenever possible, sourced locally.

We take our commitment to healthy eating very seriously. We do this because studies show that children who are well fed, are more capable of learning at a quicker pace and are able to retain information at a higher level than children who have a diet high in sugars. A healthy diet also improves a child’s ability to concentrate and behave. It is no secret that too much sugar can lead to restlessness and hyper-activity. Finally, the sad truth is that the current generation of children is the unhealthiest that this country has seen in over a century. Poor diets lead to obesity and are strong contributors to diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and a host of other chronic health problems.

We know that, as parents, you want the best for your child. We also know that many of you are trying very hard to work with us to support our wellness initiatives. We know that for many of you this has not been easy. Unfortunately, the food industry does not make it easy for any of us. Many foods are made to appear to be healthy but are actually loaded with sugar and chemicals. We have heard from many of you that you want to continue to support Galapagos in this effort and that you simply want some guidelines. We have included some basic parameters for you. Unfortunately, it is impossible for us to give a complete list but hopefully this list (please see the back of this page) will provide all of us with some clarity as to what types of foods fit in with Galapagos’ goal of healthy eating. Thank you for your support in our mission of promoting healthy, productive college-bound scholars.

Sincerely,