



Great Oaks Charter School – Bridgeport
Wellness Policy
Revised for 2025–2026 School Year

Table of Contents

1. Introduction and Policy Purpose
 2. Nutrition Education and Promotion
 3. Physical Activity and Physical Education
 4. Nutrition Standards for School Meals
 5. Competitive Foods and Beverages
 6. Marketing of Foods and Beverages
 7. Staff Wellness and Training
 8. Family and Community Engagement
 9. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Recordkeeping
 10. Legal References
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1. Introduction and Policy Purpose

Great Oaks Charter School – Bridgeport is committed to fostering a healthy school environment that supports the physical, emotional, and academic well-being of all students. Student wellness, including access to good nutrition and opportunities for regular physical activity, is a critical component of our educational program, school activities, and meal services.

We believe that promoting healthy habits as part of the total learning environment enhances students' ability to learn and thrive. By creating a school culture that encourages positive dietary and lifestyle practices, we help students build lifelong wellness behaviors that contribute to improved academic performance and overall health.

This Wellness Policy outlines our comprehensive approach to student health and wellness, including goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and school-based wellness initiatives. It is aligned with federal and state requirements and reflects our commitment to ensuring that no child is left behind due to preventable health challenges.

Through collaboration among school staff, families, and the broader community, we strive to create a supportive environment where students are empowered to make healthy choices every day.

Policy Goals:

- Support optimal physical and academic development of students.
- Promote healthy eating habits and physical activity.
- Comply with the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 and CT state statutes.
- Involve families and the community in the wellness process.

2. Nutrition Education and Promotion

Great Oaks Charter School – Bridgeport is committed to providing students with high-quality nutrition education that empowers them to make informed food choices and develop lifelong healthy eating habits. Nutrition education is embedded within the school's comprehensive health curriculum and is aligned with the Connecticut Healthy and Balanced Living Framework.

The program focuses on students' eating behaviors and is based on research-driven theories and evidence-based practices. It is designed to reflect the cultural diversity of our student population and to meet state and district health education standards.

Nutrition Education Themes include, but are not limited to:

- MyPlate and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Understanding portion sizes and balanced meals
- Identifying and limiting foods of low nutrient density
- Reading and interpreting food labels
- Sources and functions of major nutrients
- Healthy heart choices
- Multicultural influences on food choices
- The relationship between diet and disease
- Food safety and sanitation
- Understanding calories and energy balance
- Body-size acceptance and healthy weight management
- Dangers of unhealthy weight-control practices
- Making healthy snack choices

Key Strategies to Support Nutrition Education:

- Align curriculum with the Connecticut Healthy and Balanced Living Framework
- Use evidence-based instructional materials and lesson plans
- Incorporate engaging, hands-on learning experiences, such as:
 - Farm to School tasting activities
 - Garden-based learning projects
 - Student-led wellness contests and challenges
- Encourage family involvement to reinforce healthy eating habits at home

- Create a supportive school environment that promotes nutrition literacy and healthy lifestyle choices

Through these efforts, Great Oaks Charter School – Bridgeport aims to foster a school culture where students are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to make positive dietary choices that support their academic and personal success.

3. Physical Activity and Physical Education

The school values physical activity as vital for student health and learning and is committed to offering opportunities throughout the day.

Core Components:

- Offer PE to all K–12 students aligned to national and state standards.
 - Provide daily recess (not withheld for disciplinary reasons).
 - Encourage classroom physical activity breaks.
 - Provide access to recreational spaces after school where feasible.
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4. Nutrition Standards for School Meals

All students are eligible for free meals under the Community Eligibility Provision. Meals provided meet high nutritional standards.

Meal Program Guidelines:

- Follow USDA and Connecticut Nutrition Standards.
- Include:
 - Whole grains
 - Fruits and vegetables
 - Lean protein and low-fat dairy

- Provide:
 - At least 10 minutes seated time for breakfast
 - At least 20 minutes seated time for lunch
 - Ensure drinking water is always accessible.
 - Incorporate local produce when possible.
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5. Competitive Foods and Beverages

Food and beverages are currently not sold outside of the school meal programs. However in the event that food is offered outside of normal school hours during a student or family event, food and beverages must meet the Smart Snacks and CT Nutrition guidelines.

We will also apply the following standards:

- Vending machines and school based stores will not include food.
 - Promote non-food fundraising alternatives.
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6. Marketing of Foods and Beverages

The school will limit marketing to only those foods and beverages that meet nutrition standards.

Marketing Restrictions Include:

- Signage, posters, branded equipment, and giveaways during the school day.
 - Menu boards and school materials.
 - Review all marketing contracts for compliance.
 - Update durable marketing items (e.g., scoreboards) as feasible.
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7. Staff Wellness and Training

Staff are encouraged to model healthy lifestyles and will receive training to support student wellness.

Support and Training Efforts:

- Host staff wellness events:
 - Fitness challenges
 - Health screenings
 - Nutrition workshops
 - Provide annual training for nutrition services staff per USDA guidelines.
 - Encourage PD opportunities for staff delivering nutrition or physical education.
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8. Family and Community Engagement

The school will partner with families and the community to support and promote wellness initiatives.

Engagement Strategies:

- Share wellness info via newsletters, websites, and family events.
 - Involve stakeholders in wellness policy development and review.
 - Collaborate with local organizations for:
 - School gardens
 - Health fairs
 - Physical activity programming
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9. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Recordkeeping

The school is responsible for implementing and evaluating this policy regularly to ensure effectiveness.

Monitoring Process:

- Chief Operating Officer along with a school building level established wellness committee will oversee the implementation of the wellness policy.
 - Conduct a triennial assessment of policy compliance and impact.
 - Publicize results to the community.
 - Keep documentation of:
 - Wellness policy
 - Policy updates and revisions
 - Triennial assessments
 - Stakeholder involvement
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10. Legal References

This policy complies with federal and state laws related to student wellness and nutrition programs.

Legal Compliance Includes:

- Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010
- 7 CFR §210.31 – Local School Wellness Policy Requirements
- Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.):
 - §10-215f – Connecticut Nutrition Standards
 - §10-221o – Recess Requirements
 - §10-221p – Guidelines for Food and Beverages

- §10-221q – Beverage Standards
- USDA Smart Snacks in School Nutrition Standards
- Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Guidelines