

Grace House Ministries Wellness Policy

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ALLIANCE FOR A HEALTHIER GENERATION MODEL WELLNESS POLICY

Updated 02/2024 to Reflect the USDA Final Rule

This policy applies to all residents, staff, and houses in *Grace House Ministries* [hereto referred to as the School Food Authority (SFA)]. Specific measurable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below.

I. Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

The SFA will convene a representative wellness committee (hereto referred to as the WC that meets at least one time per year to establish goals for and oversee house health and safety policies and programs, including development, implementation and periodic review and update of this wellness policy (heretofore referred as “wellness policy”).

The WC membership will represent all SFA levels and include (to the extent possible), but not be limited to: house parents and caregivers; residents; child nutrition director; SFA health professionals (health education teachers, SFA health services staff [nurses, health educators, dietitian], and mental health and social services staff [SFA counselors, social workers]; SFA board of directors; and the general public. To the extent possible, the WC will include representatives from each house and reflect the diversity of the community.

Leadership

The Administrator or designee(s) will convene the WC and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy and will ensure each house’s compliance with the policy.

The designated official for oversight is (Dr. Victoria Johnson, Education Director, 205-527-6073)

The name(s), title(s), and contact information (email address is sufficient) of this/these individual(s) is (are):

Name	Title / Relationship to the SFA	Email address	Role on Committee
Judy Hinton	PT- Teacher	jhinton@grace-house.org	Assists in the evaluation and carrying out program activities of the wellness policy implementation
Victoria Johnson	Education Director	vjohnson@grace-house.org	Assists in the evaluation and carrying out program activities of the

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			wellness policy implementation
Various Social Workers for Each Girl	Social Worker		Assists in individualized plan for each child health plan
Dietitian/Nutritionist	N/A		Assists in the evaluation and carrying out program activities of the wellness policy implementation
Elvira Parks, Octavia Pointer, Marshayla Hawkins	House parents and life coach	info@grace-house.org	Assists in the evaluation and carrying out program activities of the wellness policy implementation

Each house will designate the house parent, who will ensure compliance with the policy.

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

Implementation Plan

The SFA will develop and maintain a plan for implementation to manage and coordinate the execution of this wellness policy. The plan delineates roles, responsibilities, actions and timelines specific to each house; and includes information about who will be responsible to make what change, by how much, where and when; as well as specific goals and objectives for nutrition standards for all foods and beverages available within the houses, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education and other house-based activities that promote resident wellness.

This wellness policy and the progress reports can be found at: www.grace-house.org

Recordkeeping

The SFA will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy at [SFA's Administrative Offices, 4309 Debardeleben Ave Fairfield, AL Residential Office] and/or on [Grace House Ministries iDrive]. Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating that the policy has been made available to the public;

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- Documentation of efforts to review and update the Wellness Policy; including an indication of who is involved in the update and methods the SFA uses to make stakeholders aware of their ability to participate on the WC;
- Documentation to demonstrate compliance with the annual public notification requirements;
- The most recent assessment on the implementation of the wellness policy;
- Documentation demonstrating the most recent assessment on the implementation of the Wellness Policy has been made available to the public.

Annual Notification of Policy

The SFA 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. The SFA will make this information available via the SFA website and/or SFA-wide communications. The SFA will provide as much information as possible about the house nutrition environment. This will include a summary of the SFA's events or activities related to wellness policy implementation. Annually, the SFA will also publicize the name and contact information of the SFA official leading and coordinating the committee, as well as information on how the public can get involved with the wellness committee.

Triennial Progress Assessments

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

- The extent to which houses under the jurisdiction of the SFA follow the wellness policy;
- The extent to which the SFA's wellness policy compares to the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's model wellness policy; and
- A description of the progress made in attaining the goals of the SFA's wellness policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is Jessica Welch, Education Coordinator, 205-667-3130.

The WC, in collaboration with individual houses, will monitor houses' compliance with this wellness policy.

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

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The WC will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the triennial assessments and/or as SFA 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. **The wellness policy will be assessed and updated as indicated at least every three years, following the triennial assessment.**

Community Involvement, Outreach and Communications

The SFA is committed to being responsive to community input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. The SFA will actively communicate ways in which representatives of WC and others can participate in the development, implementation and periodic review and update of the wellness policy through a variety of means appropriate for that SFA. The SFA will also inform the community of the improvements that have been made to meals and compliance with meal

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standards, availability of child nutrition programs, and a description of and compliance with Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. The SFA will use electronic mechanisms, such as email or displaying notices on the SFA'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 the wellness policy, as well as how to get involved and support the policy. The SFA will ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate to the community and accomplished through means similar to other ways that the SFA and individual houses are communicating important information with parents.

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

III. Nutrition

Meals

Our SFA is committed to serving healthy meals to residents, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams *trans*-fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meeting the nutrition needs of residents within their calorie requirements. The meal programs aim to improve the diet and health of residents, 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.

All houses within the SFA participate in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the Afterschool Snack Program. All houses within the SFA are committed to offering meals through the NSLP and SBP programs, and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all residents;
- Are appealing and attractive to residents;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations. (The SFA offers reimbursable meals that meet [USDA nutrition standards](#).)
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using the following marketing and merchandising techniques:
 - Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chafing 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 residents.
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt residents to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal.
 - White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all refrigerators.
 - House parent verbally lets the residents know what is available
 - Resident surveys and taste testing opportunities are used to inform menu development, dining space decor and promotional ideas.
 - Resident artwork is displayed in the service and/or dining areas.
 - Daily announcements are used to promote and market menu options.

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- *The SFA child nutrition program will accommodate residents with special dietary needs.*
- *Residents will be allowed at least 15 minutes to eat breakfast and lunch, counting from the time they have received their meal and are seated (meets Alabama Implementation of Smart Snacks in School and Fundraising Activities).*
- *Residents are served lunch at a reasonable and appropriate time of day.*
- *The SFA will implement the following Farm to School activities:*
 - *Messages about agriculture and nutrition are reinforced throughout the learning environment;*
 - *SFA hosts a garden;*
 - *SFA hosts field trips to local farms; and*
 - *SFA utilizes promotions or special events, such as tastings, that highlight the local/regional products.*

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All child nutrition program directors, managers and staff will meet or exceed hiring and annual continuing education/training requirements in the [USDA professional standards for child nutrition professionals](#). These child 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 residents throughout the school day* and throughout every school campus* (“school campus” and “school day” are defined in the glossary). The SFA will make drinking water available where meals are served during mealtimes.

- Residents will be allowed to bring and carry (approved) water bottles filled with only water with them throughout the day.

Competitive Foods and Beverages and Fundraisers

The SFA is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to residents on the school campus* during the school day* support healthy eating. If foods and beverages sold outside of the meal programs (e.g., “competitive” foods and beverages) are available, they will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards and Alabama’s Implementation of Smart Snacks in School and Fundraising Activities, at a minimum. Smart Snacks aim to improve resident 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, as well as a Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools 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.foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org.

To support healthy food choices and improve resident health and well-being, no foods or beverages will be sold. Additionally, no food or beverages outside the reimbursable meal programs will be offered to residents on the school campus during the school day* one hour before, during, or one hour after meal program times.

Celebrations and Rewards

Grace House Ministries does provide food during celebrations/parties (i.e. birthdays, etc.)

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However, all foods offered within the houses outside the reimbursable meals (i.e. breakfast, lunch, and Afterschool Snack) will not be available one hour before, during, or one hour after meal program times.

1. Rewards and incentives. Foods and beverages will not be used as a reward, or withheld as punishment for any reason, such as for performance or behavior.

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 meal programs. Residents and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout the houses. Nutrition promotion also includes marketing and advertising nutritious foods and beverages to residents and is most effective when implemented consistently through a comprehensive and multi-channel approach by SFA staff, residents, and the community.

The SFA will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all residents throughout the school campus, as well as encourage participation in meal programs.

Nutrition/Health Education

The SFA will teach, model, encourage and support healthy eating by all residents. Houses will provide nutrition/health education and engage in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide residents with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Includes enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, farm visits and gardens;
- Promotes fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasizes caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);
- Links with meal programs, nutrition promotion activities, gardens, other foods, and nutrition-related community services;
- Teaches media literacy with an emphasis on food and beverage marketing; and
- Includes nutrition education training for staff.
- Relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Reading and using FDA's nutrition fact labels
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- Eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products
- 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

- Social influences on healthy eating, including media, family, peers, and culture

Food and Beverage Marketing in Houses

The SFA is committed to providing an environment that ensures opportunities for all residents to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the day while minimizing commercial distractions. The SFA strives to teach residents how to make informed choices about nutrition, health, and physical activity. These efforts will be weakened if residents are subjected to advertising on SFA property that contains messages inconsistent with the health information the SFA is imparting through nutrition education and health promotion efforts. It is the intent of the SFA to protect and promote resident's health by permitting advertising and marketing for only those foods and beverages consistent with the SFA's wellness policy.

Any foods and beverages marketed or promoted to residents 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 residents.

Food and beverage marketing is defined as advertising and other promotions in houses. Food and beverage marketing often includes an oral, written, or graphic statement made for promoting the sale of a food or beverage product made by the producer, manufacturer, seller or any other entity with a commercial interest in the product.¹ This term includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Brand names, trademarks, logos, or tags, except when placed on a physically present food or beverage product or its container.
- Corporate brand, logo, name or trademark on cups used for beverage dispensing, menu boards, coolers, trash cans and other food service equipment; as well as on posters, book covers, pupil assignment books or supplies displayed, distributed, offered by the SFA.
- Advertisements in house publications or house mailings.
- Free product samples, taste tests or coupons of a product, or free samples displaying advertising of a product.

As the SFA nutrition services reviews existing contracts and considers new contracts, equipment, and product purchasing (and replacement) decisions should reflect the applicable marketing guidelines established by the SFA wellness policy.

IV. Physical Activity

Residents and adolescents should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of residents' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive SFA physical activity program. This program reflects strong coordination and synergy across all

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the components: quality physical education as the foundation; physical activity before, during and after school; staff involvement and family and community engagement; and the SFA is committed to providing these opportunities. Houses will ensure that these varied physical activity opportunities are in addition to, and not as a substitute for, physical education (addressed in “Physical Education” subsection). All houses in the SFA will be encouraged to successfully address this program.

To the extent practicable, the SFA will ensure that its grounds and facilities are safe, and that equipment is available to residents to be active. The SFA will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

Physical Education

The SFA will provide residents with physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education material. Physical education will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help residents develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts (discussed in the “*Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education*” subsection).

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

The SFA will include in the health education material 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
- 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

Before and After School Activities

The SFA offers opportunities for residents to participate in physical activity either before and/or after the school day (or both) through a variety of methods. The SFA will encourage residents to be physically active before and after school.

V. Other Activities that Promote Resident Wellness

The SFA will integrate wellness activities across the entire house setting, not just in the kitchen and physical activity facilities. The SFA will 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 resident well-being, optimal development and strong educational outcomes.

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Houses in the SFA are encouraged to coordinate content across curricular areas that promote resident health.

All efforts related to obtaining federal, state or association recognition for efforts, or grants/funding opportunities for healthy environments will be coordinated with and complementary of the wellness policy, including but not limited to ensuring the involvement of the WC.

All SFA-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy guidelines. All SFA-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity and healthy eating opportunities when appropriate.

Community Partnerships

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

Professional Learning

When feasible, the SFA 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 SFA staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing SFA reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.

Glossary:

Extended School Day – the time during, before and after school that includes activities such as clubs, intramural sports, band and choir practice, drama rehearsals and more.

School Campus - areas that are owned or leased by the school and used at any time for school-related activities, including on the outside of the school building, school buses or other vehicles used to transport residents, athletic fields and stadiums (e.g., on scoreboards, coolers, cups, and water bottles), or parking lots.

School Day – the time between midnight the night before to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

Triennial – recurring every three years.