

GCSSD Coordinated School Health

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This newsletter has been designed to give students, staff, parents, and the community important information and updates regarding the GCSSD Coordinated School Health program. I hope you find this newsletter helpful.

GCSSD Faculty, Staff, Students, Parents, and Community,

Happy Holidays!

Tennessee Coordinated School Health connects physical, emotional, and social health with education. This coordinated approach improves students' health and their capacity to learn through the support of families, communities and schools working together. Coordinated School Health works with many partners to address school health priorities.

Please see inside this month's newsletter for more information on this month's CSH events, health observances, and Here 4 TN – Employee Assistance Program. Also, resources are included for Staff Wellness, Smart Snacks, Brain Breaks, and Physical Activity.

If I can ever be of assistance to you, please let me know.

Thanks,
Amy Richardson
GCSSD CSH Coordinator



Important Dates

Gibson County Prevention Coalition Meeting

December 1st

January PD Planning Meeting

December 6th

Backpack Delivery

December 7th

Mental Health Teletherapy Meeting with Carey Counseling

December 8th

CSH Mid-Year Report Due to the State

December 15th

November Highlights

GCHS YAC Students Help with Dyer Station Giving Tree

GC Youth Advisory Council (YAC) students added wish list information (without names or identifying information) for students at Dyer School who need extra help to Christmas cards. These cards were then taken and placed on the trees at City Lumber and Food Rite so that individuals/groups in the area can help these students have a better Christmas.



Health Observances
National Handwashing Awareness Week
December 4 – 10, 2023



WHY WE LOVE NATIONAL HANDWASHING AWARENESS WEEK

1. **Healthy hands are happy hands** - And happy hands make for happy and healthy homes.
2. **It helps prevent the spread of germs** - Think of how many different things we touch during an average day. Now imagine how many of those things were touched by other people's hands. Yuck! Wash your hands to prevent the spread of dangerous microbes.
3. **Let's shake on it** - Finally, we love National Handwashing Awareness Week because it reminds everybody else — especially doctors and those who prepare the food we eat — to take cleanliness and hygiene seriously.

Action for Happiness Calendar: Do Good December 2023

This month, we're encouraging you to carry out small acts of kindness.

Kindness is contagious and helping others has been proven to make us feel better too! Let's try to focus on being generous with our time and attention rather than money - it's free and better for everyone.

December Kindness 2023

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
 4 Support a charity, cause or campaign you really care about	 5 Give a gift to someone who is homeless or feeling lonely	 6 Leave a positive message for someone else to find	 7 Give kind comments to as many people as possible today	1 Spread kindness and share the December calendar with others 8 Do something helpful for a friend or family member	2 Contact someone you can't be with to see how they are 9 Notice when you're hard on yourself or others and be kind instead	3 Offer to help someone who is facing difficulties at the moment 10 Listen wholeheartedly to others without judging them
11 Buy an extra item and donate it to a local food bank 18 Ask for help and let someone else discover the joy of giving	12 Be generous. Feed someone with food, love or kindness today 19 Contact someone who may be alone or feeling isolated	13 See how many different people you can smile at today 20 Help others by giving away something that you don't need	14 Share a happy memory or inspiring thought with a loved one 21 Appreciate kindness and thank people who do things for you	15 Say hello to your neighbour and brighten up their day 22 Congratulate someone for an achievement that may go unnoticed	16 Look for something positive to say to everyone you speak to 23 Choose to give or receive the gift of forgiveness	17 Give thanks. List the kind things others have done for you 24 Bring joy to others. Share something which made you laugh
25 Treat everyone with kindness today, including yourself!	26 Get outside. Pick up litter or do something kind for nature	27 Call a relative who is far away to say hello and have a chat	28 Be kind to the planet. Eat less meat and use less energy	29 Turn off digital devices and really listen to people	30 Let someone know how much you appreciate them and why	31 Plan some new acts of kindness to do in 2024

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Happier • Kinder • Together



<https://actionforhappiness.org/sites/default/files/Dec%202023.pdf>

Headspace – Free for TN Educators!

Great tool for stress reduction. – Click on this link to sign up
[Headspace for Educators](https://www.headspace.com/educators?mc_cid=557c67f579&mc_eid=ff7e6a0bb4)



Headspace offers free access to K-12 teachers and supporting staff in the US. Whether you're feeling inspired to connect more with your students or you're looking for a new way to bring calm to your classroom, Headspace can help students build healthy habits that last a lifetime. It is a mindfulness app that can help provide better focus, less stress, and happier thoughts. School staff members can use it to gain these benefits personally even if they don't utilize it in the classroom. It can be viewed on a desktop or there is an app for cell phones.

Staff who have previously signed up or who do so by Monday December 11th will have a chance to win a Subway gift card. Remember to use this link to get free access for TN Educators!

https://www.headspace.com/educators?mc_cid=557c67f579&mc_eid=ff7e6a0bb4

Handling Holiday Stress for Families

Most families would say that the holiday season normally brings both elements of joy and difficulty. But with illnesses circulating, costs going up, pressure to get the best toys and gifts and full calendars, we can struggle with feelings of stress or disappointment. What can we do to prepare and make this holiday season happy and enjoyable with our families? While there might be a family cookbook passed down through generations, no one has a family playbook for how to celebrate the holidays perfectly every year.

Here are a few suggestions to make the holiday season more merry and bright:

1. **Think about what really matters** - Kids get sick, someone won't like their gift, a new holiday recipe may not turn out. Reminding yourself to be open to challenges can help prevent undue levels of frustration and disruption. If we go into the holiday season expecting things to be perfect and run smoothly, we are bound for disappointment. Before starting the holiday season, take some time to pause and reflect on what really matters to you and your family. Is it spending time with loved ones? Is it passing down family traditions to your children? Is it volunteering and helping others? Making sure you spend time doing what you value will help you find calm and happiness during a busy time.
2. **Connect with Family and Friends** - Having strong bonds with other people (social connections) is good for mental health! And the holidays can be a great time to see and spend time with loved ones. Find ways for you and your children to connect with close friends or relatives. We know the holidays can also be hard for people whose friends and family live far away. If you're unable to travel to see some of the people you love most at the holidays, find ways to connect with them using technology, or even mailing cards/notes back and forth. Try to think of family, friends and neighbors who might have less local social support and offer to include them in festivities or drop something off at their door. It is an act of kindness that won't be forgotten, and helps children learn a valuable lesson about empathy and kindness. Share a portion of a meal, make an art project to give them or invite them to your holiday gathering. It will benefit your family as much as the person receiving the act of kindness.
3. **Set Healthy Boundaries** - Since you've thought about what matters most to you during the holiday season, you can let go of other activities that you and your family don't have time for. It's okay to say no to some things in order to do more of the things that matter to you and your family. A few ideas to get you started:
 - Communicate clearly and thoughtfully – be honest and respectful about what you and your family are able to do, and not do, this holiday season.
 - Avoid guessing at someone else's feelings – you may think that they are disappointed, but you don't know that for sure. When in doubt, ask them.
 - Stick to the boundaries that you've set – now that you've established some boundaries, you need to keep them. This can be challenging at first, but very rewarding as you see yourself and your family more focused on the things that bring you joy.
4. **Take Time for Self-Care** - With all the busy plans many of us have around the holidays, it's easy to let our normal routines go. Ensure you stick to your [self-care](#) routine for you and your family to stay well. If you don't already make time for self-care, there's no better time to start. Here are some activities to help guide you:
 - Get some exercise and include your family to help create good habits for everyone. There are thousands of free workouts online that you can follow from home with no equipment needed.
 - Take a hike, find a new park or nature preserve or walk in your local neighborhood. Studies show that spending time outdoors, even in cold weather, is good for mental health.
 - Take time for [mindfulness activities](#) as well. Teach your children to be able to sit and recognize the world around them. The sounds, sights and smells they might normally ignore. Mindfulness helps our brains reset and keeps us feeling well.

By prioritizing what really matters, connecting with loved ones, setting healthy boundaries, and taking care of ourselves, we can reduce stress and find more to enjoy this holiday season.

<https://www.onoursleeves.org/mental-wellness-tools-guides/mental-health-holidays/handling-holiday-stress>

Benefits of School-Based Physical Activity

Regular physical activity in childhood and adolescence is important for promoting lifelong health and well-being and preventing a variety of health conditions. Schools are in a unique position, regardless of learning mode, to help students attain the recommended 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily.

A Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP) can increase physical activity opportunities before, during, and after school.



Increasing youth physical activity:

Before and After School

- Walking or biking to and from school
- Intramural sports and clubs
- Extended day programs

In Physical Education

- Standards-based curricula
- Motor skills development
- Physical fitness

During School

- Classroom physical activity breaks
- Active lessons
- Daily recess

Through Staff Involvement

- Role models for wellness
- Classroom participation
- Professional development programs

With Community Engagement

- Shared use of recreational facilities
- Opportunities for physical activity when school is out of session
- Environments for safe travel to and from school



Benefits everyone:

The Students

- Improved attention*
- Better mood and memory*
- Improved bone health
- Healthier weight
- Better heart health
- Lower risk of depression
- Better grades

The Teachers

- More students on task*
- Improved classroom behaviors*
- Students getting better grades
- Fewer absences

The Community

- Lower health care costs
- Expanded school partnerships
- More access to activity-friendly spaces

**Immediate benefit from a single physical activity session*

To learn more, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity>



Physical Activity Resources

Active Students, Active Learners <https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/education/districts/active-academics.html>



Incorporating movement before, during and after the school day has been proven to enhance the cognitive capacity of children. When students are active, they process and retain information more effectively, leading to increased academic performance. Active students also tend to have greater attention spans, better behavior, and can have better overall mental health. The Tennessee Departments of Education and Health are teaming to help bring tools, success stories, and evidence to education decision makers that illustrate the immense impacts of physical movement on the whole student, particularly academic performance. Taken together, movement and educational instruction will help our Tennessee children to be the best learners they can possibly be while creating lasting impacts on their physical and mental health.

“Supported by the Tennessee Department of Education and the Tennessee Department of Health”



Move to Learn - Better grades. Better health. Studies have shown that physical activity increases children's ability to learn, and as fitness improves, test scores improve. That's why Move to Learn incorporates movement in the classroom through short exercise videos and healthy lesson plans. <https://movetolearnms.org/for-the-classroom/>



GoNoodle inspires all kids to be active and mindful with a wide range of offerings that appeal to kids' different ages, interests, skills, and abilities. This interactive system fuels learning by getting kids focused and ready to learn by getting them up, moving and becoming more mindful.

Website: Click [here](#) **Contact Information:** support@gonoodle.com

Happy Merry Everything – Go Noodle Channel <https://www.gonoodle.com/tags/QXB54Y/happymerryeverything>

Brief video: The benefits of recess <https://www.edutopia.org/video/importance-recess>

Brain Break Resources

Edutopia

The Mysterious Power of Brain Breaks <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kmU3VGfh150>

Brain Breaks for the Classroom at Every Grade Band <https://everfi.com/blog/k-12/brain-breaks-for-the-classroom-at-every-grade-band/>

54 Educational Brain Breaks Your Students Will Love



<https://www.weareteachers.com/brain-breaks-for-kids/>

Brain Breaks for Elementary Students



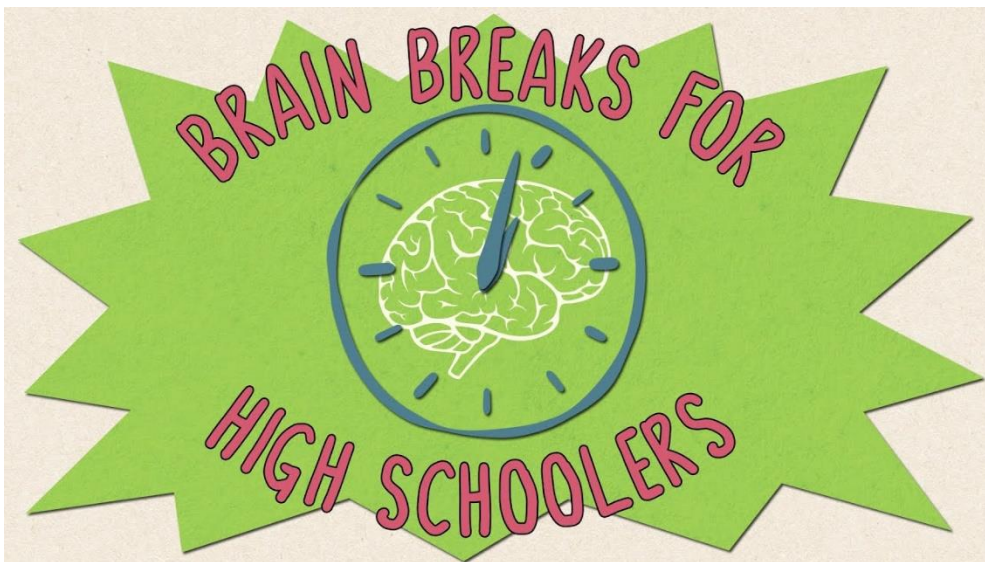
[9 Brain Breaks for Elementary Students](#)

Brain Breaks for Middle School



<https://minds-in-bloom.com/20-three-minute-brain-breaks/>

Brain Breaks for High School



[Schoolers.](#)

9 Brain Breaks Teens Will Love <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBjMEVbnZ4E>

[17 Brain Breaks Tailored for High](#)

GCSSD Wellness Plan

The GCSSD Wellness Plan contains pertinent information on the topics of nutrition and physical activity. It can be found on the GCSSD CSH website. As part of this we are asking students, families, and school staff to help in these areas.

SMART SNACK IDEAS

Fresh vegetables (sacks of carrot/celery sticks, broccoli, cauliflower)

Fresh fruits (sacks of apples, bananas, grapes, oranges, strawberries)

Apple sauce

Twizzlers

String cheese

Rice Krispie Treats

Raisins

Fruit gummies

Cubed cheese

Reduced Fat Chips

Fruit roll ups

Crackers

Go-Gurt yogurt

Jello or Pudding

All foods should meet the Smart Snacks guidelines, and this can be verified using the Smart Snacks Calculator at <https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/calculator/>

Please note most of our schools sell snacks and those that do make sure these snacks meet the health requirements.

Snacks may include but not limited to:



CELEBRATIONS AND PARTIES

For celebrations and parties in order to make sure that all foods served to children are safe and sanitary, all items served at school parties must be purchased rather than homemade and individually wrapped or from a secured sealed package with nutrition label included. Therefore, we will not accept cupcakes, donuts, etc. from Walmart and/or local bakeries.

Food Brought to School from Outside Vendors - Any food brought into schools from outside restaurants should be limited and in approved situations only.

https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/782375/GCSSD_Wellness_Plan_2017_2018_Signed_Document.pdf

Online Grocery Shopping offers Convenience and Health Benefits



Buying groceries online continues to be a popular choice allows you to:

- Save time and money.
- Enjoy a convenient shopping experience.
- Reduce temptation for impulse buying unhealthy items.
- Stay on budget by searching for lowest-price items, using electronic coupons, and knowing the running total before checkout.
- Plan meals ahead of time and avoid buying items that are already on hand.
- Know what products are in stock and choose substitutions when needed.
- Add items to your virtual cart throughout the week, as a modern-day shopping list.
- Choose how to receive the items, such as through free store pickup or an at-home delivery service.

Whether you're a seasoned pro or a first timer, there are ways to make the most of your online grocery shopping experience.

Learn the process. Start by visiting the store's website or downloading its app. Familiarize yourself with how to sort and search for items (this is helpful if you are trying to stay on budget or have dietary restrictions). Find out if there's a minimum purchase required to avoid a service fee.

Plan ahead. Look over available pickup days and times. How quickly you can get your items will vary at each store. Don't wait until the last minute to place an order, especially during holidays or other high-demand times.

Add any special instructions. Some stores let you include substitution preferences or notes about specific items (such as for meat and produce) to help the in-store shoppers complete your order.

Get ready for your order. When picking up the items, check in on the store's app or website before you head to get them. Park in specially marked spots at the store. The groceries will be loaded while you stay in your vehicle.

Written by American Heart Association editorial staff and reviewed by science and medicine advisors.

<https://www.heart.org/en/healthy-living/healthy-eating/eat-smart/nutrition-basics/online-grocery-shopping-offers-convenience-health-benefits>