

Wellness Policy

Overview

Springfield Preparatory Charter School (“Springfield Prep”) is committed to providing a school environment that promotes and protects its students’ health, well-being, and ability to learn by supporting healthy eating and physical activity. Therefore, it is the policy of this school that:

- The school will engage students, parents, teachers, and staff in developing, implementing, monitoring and reviewing school-wide nutrition and physical activity policies.
- All students in grades K-8 (we will reach full capacity in the fall of 2023) will have opportunities, support, and encouragement to be physically active on a regular basis.
- Foods and beverages sold or served at school will meet the nutrition recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Qualified school staff will provide students with access to a variety of affordable, nutritious, and appealing foods that meet the health and nutrition needs of students; will accommodate the religious, ethnic, and cultural diversity of the student body in meal planning; and will provide clean, safe and pleasant settings and adequate time for students to eat.
- To the maximum extent practicable, Springfield Prep Charter School will participate in available federal school meal programs (including the School Breakfast Program and the National School Lunch Program (including after-school snacks)).
- Springfield Prep Charter School will provide nutrition education and physical education to foster lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity, and will establish linkages between health education and school meal programs, and with related community services.

Needs Assessment

Springfield Prep Charter School will open its doors in August 2015. In establishing a school-wide health and wellness policy, it was necessary to understand the needs of Springfield students and families and establish programs to develop students’ nutritional awareness and physical activity and education at Springfield Prep Charter School. To achieve policy goals, Springfield Prep Charter School has established a school health committee (consisting of the Head of School, Director of Operations, and the School Nurse). This committee met in the summer of 2015 to establish programmatic goals and policies related to wellness:

- Springfield Prep Charter School’s primary goal in providing physical education is to provide our students with the knowledge, skills, and ability to maintain a healthy lifestyle through lifelong physical exercise, regardless of their physical abilities.
- All grades will participate in a physical education program. The purpose of physical education at Springfield Prep Charter School will be two-fold. It will instill in our students the importance of lifelong physical exercise. It will expose our students to fitness, movement, and self-awareness skills and techniques that position them strongly to take advantage of the athletic opportunities that will be offered to them in high school and college.
- Springfield Prep Charter School does not have a gymnasium and thus must be creative in our use of Community Room, outdoor space and nearby community parks and fields. The school has purchased equipment for our physical education and extra-curricular programs which take place on the school’s grounds. Activities and sports that require larger areas may take place off school grounds.

- Springfield Prep Charter School students will learn the fundamental skills of stretching and calisthenics, with concentration on proper use of their skeletal muscles.
- Generally, the students will partake in physical education twice per week in the school's Community Room.
- Embedded in the fitness curriculum will be a health education component which will complement the physical education curriculum by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television.
- The health education curriculum will address essential healthy eating topics including; benefits of healthy eating, importance of making healthy choices when eating out and snacking, the Food Pyramid and nutritious choices for each group, using food labels, risks of unhealthy weight control practices, such as crash or fad diets, purging, diet pills, and tobacco use, eating disorders (e.g., anorexia, bulimia), and food safety, including hand washing and safe food purchasing, preparation and storage. Different programming will be offered at each grade level to ensure that it is age-appropriate.

Health and Wellness Policy Goals

Based on the anticipated needs of Springfield Prep Charter School students, the following policy goals have been recognized:

1. Food and Beverages Brought Into the School, Sold and Served

School Meals

Meals served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs at Springfield Prep Charter School will:

- Be appealing and attractive to children
- Be served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet, at a minimum, nutrition requirements established by local, state, and federal statutes and regulations;
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables
- Serve only low-fat milk and 100 percent fruit juice.

Breakfast

To ensure that all children have breakfast, either at home or at school, in order to meet their nutritional needs and enhance their ability to learn:

- Springfield Prep Charter School will serve school breakfasts that encourage participation by serving breakfast in each classroom to make it easily accessible to all students.
- Springfield Prep Charter School will notify parents and students of the availability of the School Breakfast Program.
- Springfield Prep Charter School will encourage parents to provide a healthy breakfast for their children through newsletter articles, take home materials, and other means.
- Springfield Prep Charter School students will have the opportunity to eat breakfast at school between the hours of 7:30 am to 8:00 am daily.

Free and Reduced-priced Meals

Springfield Prep Charter School will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price school meals.

- Springfield Prep Charter School will use a card scanning system to record which students eat school breakfast and lunch. The system will not indicate if the child has received a free, reduced, or full price meal.
- Springfield Prep Charter School will not accept any monies in the area where lunch or breakfast are served.
- Springfield Prep Charter School will mail the Free and Reduced Lunch application to all students who do not qualify under Direct Certification in order to avoid having some students receive applications by hand while others do not.

Summer Food Service Program

Springfield Prep Charter School will notify parents of locations in their communities where children can receive free breakfast and lunch during the summer.

Meal Times and Scheduling

Springfield Prep Charter School will:

- Provide students with at least 10 minutes to eat after sitting down for breakfast and 15 minutes after sitting down for lunch;
- Schedule meal periods at appropriate times between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m.
- Not schedule tutoring, club, or organizational meetings or activities during meal times, unless students may eat during such activities; and
- Will provide students access to hand washing or hand sanitizing before they eat meals or snacks.

Food Service Professionals

The food program will be administered by qualified professionals. Professionals will obtain appropriate certification and/or training to administer the food program on a continuous basis.

Sharing of Foods and Beverages

Springfield Prep Charter School discourages students from sharing their foods or beverages with one another during meal or snack times, given concerns about allergies and other restrictions on some students' diets.

Competitive Foods

All foods and beverages sold individually outside the reimbursable school meal programs (including those sold through student stores or fundraising activities) during the school day will meet the following nutrition and portion size standards:

Beverages

- Allowed: water or seltzer water; 100% fruit and vegetable juices; unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free fluid milk
- Not allowed: soft drinks containing caloric sweeteners; sports drinks; fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50 percent real fruit juice or that contain additional caloric sweeteners; beverages containing caffeine.

Foods

- The school will make an effort to offer to sell at least one fruit and/or non-fried vegetable at any location on the school site where foods are sold. Such items could include, but are not limited to, fresh fruits and vegetables; 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice; cooked, dried or canned fruits (canned in fruit juice or light syrup); and cooked, dried, or canned vegetables.

Celebrations and School-Sponsored Events

Springfield Prep Charter School will limit celebrations that involve food during the school day to no more than one party per class per month. Each party typically will include no more than one food or beverage that does not meet nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold individually.

Fundraising Activities

To support children's health and school nutrition-education efforts, school fundraising activities generally will not involve food or will use only foods that meet nutritional standards.

Snacks

Snacks eaten during the school day, in after-school programs or enrichment programs will make a positive contribution to the student's diet and health, with an emphasis on healthy snacks, and water/juice as the primary beverage.

2. Physical and Nutrition Education

Springfield Prep Charter School aims to teach, encourage and support healthy eating by students. Springfield Prep Charter School will:

- Offer physical and nutrition education at each grade level as part of a sequential, comprehensive, standards-based program designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Integrate health education into subjects such as math, science, language arts, social sciences, and elective subjects;
- Promote fruits, vegetables, whole grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, health food preparation methods, and health-enhancing nutrition practices;
- Emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (physical activity/exercise);
- Teach media literacy with an emphasis on food marketing; and
- Include training for teachers and other staff.

Family Support

Springfield Prep Charter School will provide information about physical education and other school-based physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day; and support parents' efforts to provide their children with opportunities to be physically active outside of school. Such supports will include sharing information about physical activity and physical education through take-home materials, special events, or physical education homework.

3. Physical Activity

Physical Activity Opportunities and Physical Education

- All students in grades K-8, including students with disabilities and special healthcare will receive physical education once a week for at least 40 minutes.

- Student involvement in other activities involving physical activity (e.g., interscholastic or intramural sports) will not be substituted for meeting the physical education requirements.
- Students will spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Other Physical Activity Opportunities

In addition to our physical education classes, Springfield Prep Charter School is partnering with the local YMCA to provide students with the opportunity to participate in an after school program that allows for physical movement opportunities as well as academic support.

Physical Activity and Punishment

Teachers and other school and community personnel will not use physical activity (e.g. physical education) as punishment.

4. Evaluation

As Springfield Prep Charter School grows from serving only Kindergarten and First Grade students to serving students in grades K-8, staff will conduct annual assessments to review policy compliance, assess programs, and determine areas in need of improvement. As part of that review, Springfield Prep Charter School's Wellness Committee will review nutrition and physical activity and nutrition and physical education policies and program elements. Springfield Prep Charter School will, as necessary, revise the wellness policy and develop work plans to facilitate their implementation.

The Head of School or designee will ensure compliance with established school-wide nutrition and physical activity wellness policies noted above.