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School at Springbrook Wellness Policy

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School at Springbrook Wellness Policy

Exordium

The School at Springbrook is committed to the optimal development of every student. The school believes that for students to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental, and social success, we need to create positive, safe, and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every setting, throughout the school year.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity before, during, and after the school day, are strongly correlated with positive student outcomes. For example, student participation in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) School Breakfast Program is associated with higher grades and standardized test scores, lower absenteeism, and better performance on cognitive tasks.^{1,2,3,4,5,6,7} Conversely, less-than-adequate consumption of specific foods including fruits, vegetables, and dairy products, is associated with lower grades among students.^{8,9,10} In addition, students who are physically active through active transport to and from school, recess, physical activity breaks, high-quality adaptive physical education, and extracurricular activities – do better academically.^{11,12,13,14}

This policy outlines the School at Springbrook's approach to ensuring there are opportunities for all students to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout the school day while minimizing commercial distractions. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Students in the school have access to healthy foods throughout the school day and in the residential setting in accordance with Federal and state nutrition standards;
- Students receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors;
- Students have opportunities to be physically active before, during, and after school;
- Schools engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote student wellness;
- School staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of school;
- The students' families are engaged in supporting the work of the school in creating continuity between school and other settings for students and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits; and
- The school establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about, and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives.

This policy applies to all students and staff, in the school and residential settings.



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School Wellness Committee

Committee Role and Membership

The School at Springbrook will convene a representative school wellness committee that meets on a quarterly basis to establish goals for and oversee school health and programs, including development, implementation, and periodic review and update of this wellness policy.

The committee membership will represent school-wide departments (dietary, nursing, therapy, APE and administration)

Leadership

The Program Director or designee(s) will convene the committee and facilitate development of updates to the wellness policy when necessary, and will ensure school compliance with the policy.

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

Name	Title	Email address	Role
Meg Shivers	Dietary Coordinator	Shiversm@springbrookny.org	Committee CoChair and Policy Coordinator
Jeffrey Edelstein	GEMS Program Director	Edelsteinj@springbrookny.org	Committee CoChair and Policy Coordinator
Roberta Hohensee	Therapy Coordinator	Hohenseer@springbrookny.org	MAT Coordinator and Therapist Representative
Kathy Ramiza	Chief Clinical Officer	Ramizak@springbrookny.org	Nursing Representative
Jon Philby	APE Instructor and Special Olympics Coordinator	Philbyj@springbrookny.org	APE Representative
Traci Lanner	Golisano Program Director	Lannert@springbrookny.org	Allergies and Intolerances Consultant



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I. Wellness Policy Implementation, Monitoring, Accountability, and Parental Engagement

Implementation Plan

The School at Springbrook 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 school, 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 on the school campus, food and beverage marketing, nutrition promotion and education, physical activity, physical education, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness.

This wellness policy and the progress reports can be found at: <U:\Education\Assistant Director\School Wellness Policy>

Recordkeeping

The School at Springbrook will retain records to document compliance with the requirements of the wellness policy at <U:\Education\Assistant Director\School Wellness Policy>

Documentation maintained in this location will include but will not be limited to:

- The written wellness policy;
- Documentation of annual policy progress reports for the school; and
- Documentation of the quarterly review of the policy for the school;

Annual Progress Reports

The school will compile an annual report to share basic information about the wellness policy and report on the progress of the school in meeting wellness goals. This annual report will be published in December each year and will include, but is not limited to:

- The internal website address for the wellness policy and/or how parents can receive/access a copy of the wellness policy;
- A description of the school's progress in meeting the wellness policy goals;
- A summary of the school's events or activities related to wellness policy implementation;
- The name, position title, and contact information of the designated school policy coordinator; and
- Information on how individuals and parents can get involved with the Wellness Policy committee.

The School Wellness Committee will establish and monitor goals and objectives for the school.



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Triennial Progress Assessments

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

- The extent to which the school is in compliance with the wellness policy;
- The extent to which the school'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 school-wide goals of the wellness policy.

The position/person responsible for managing the triennial assessment and contact information is Meg Shivers, Dietary Coordinator, Shiversm@springbrookny.org.

The School at Springbrook will notify student families of the availability of the triennial progress report.

Revisions and Updating the Policy

The Wellness Committee will update or modify the wellness policy based on the results of the annual progress reports and triennial assessments, and/or as school priorities 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 school is committed to being responsive to student family input, which begins with awareness of the wellness policy. The school will share this policy with parents through electronic notification of their ability to request a paper or digital copy and welcomes their involvement in the process. The school will also inform parents of improvements that have been made to school meals and compliance with school meal standards, and the availability of child nutrition programs and how to apply. The school will display notices on the company's website to ensure that families are notified of the availability of this information.

The school will notify families about the availability of the wellness policy annually, at a minimum. The school will also use these mechanisms to inform the community about the availability of the annual and triennial reports.

II. Nutrition

School Meals

The School at Springbrook is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free and low-fat milk; moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and zero grams *trans*-fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer's specification); and to meet the nutrition needs of school children within their calorie requirements. The school meal programs



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aim to improve the diet and health of school children, 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.

The school participates in USDA child nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch (NSLP) and Breakfast Programs. The school also operates additional nutrition-related programs and activities including Adaptive Physical Education classes, opportunities for open gym, health instruction and counseling. The school is committed to offering school meals through the NSLP and other applicable Federal child nutrition programs, that:

- Are accessible to all students;
- Are appealing and attractive to children;
- Are served in clean and pleasant settings;
- Meet or exceed current nutrition requirements established by local, state, and Federal statutes and regulations.
- Promote healthy food and beverage choices using at least ten of the following [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#):
 - Whole fruit options are displayed in attractive bowls or baskets (instead of chaffing 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 students
 - All available vegetable options have been given creative or descriptive names
 - Daily vegetable options are bundled into all grab and go meals available to students
 - All staff members, especially those serving, have been trained to politely prompt students to select and consume the daily vegetable options with their meal
 - White milk is placed in front of other beverages in all coolers
 - Alternative entrée options (e.g., salad bar, yogurt parfaits, etc.) are highlighted on signs within all service and dining areas

Staff Qualifications and Professional Development

All school 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 school 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 students throughout the school day. The school will make drinking water available where school meals are served during



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Celebrations and Rewards

All foods provided in the school cafeteria as part of the school lunch program will meet or exceed the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards including through:

1. Celebrations and parties. The dietary staff will share a list of healthy party ideas with teachers, including non-food celebration ideas. Healthy party ideas from the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#) and from the [USDA](#).
2. The dietary staff will consult as needed with parents regarding the nutritional content of classroom snacks sent in from home.
3. Rewards and incentives. The school's behavioral staff, as needed, will provide teachers and other relevant school staff a [list of alternative ways to reward children](#).

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 school meal programs. Students and staff will receive consistent nutrition messages throughout schools, classrooms, gymnasiums, and cafeterias.

The school will promote healthy food and beverage choices for all students throughout the school campus. The School at Springbrook does not charge any students for lunch regardless of eligibility.

- Implementing evidence-based healthy food promotion techniques through the school meal programs using [Smarter Lunchroom techniques](#); and
- Promoting foods and beverages that meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. Additional possible promotion techniques that the school may use are available at www.healthiergeneration.org/smartsnacks.

Nutrition Education

The school aims to teach, model, encourage, and support healthy eating by students. The school provides nutrition education and engages in nutrition promotion that:

- Is designed to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and protect their health;
- Is part of not only health education classes, but also integrated into other classroom instruction through subjects such as home economics and adaptive physical education.
- Include enjoyable, developmentally-appropriate, culturally-relevant, and participatory activities, such as cooking demonstrations or lessons, promotions, taste-testing, and farm visits;



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- Promote fruits, vegetables, whole-grain products, low-fat and fat-free dairy products, and healthy food preparation methods;
- Emphasize caloric balance between food intake and energy expenditure (promotes physical activity/exercise);

Essential Healthy Eating Topics in Health Education

The school will include in the health education curriculum the following essential topics on healthy eating adapted to the students' functional levels:

- The relationship between healthy eating and personal health and disease prevention
- Reading and using USDA's food labels
- Eating a variety of foods every day
- Balancing food intake and physical activity
- Eating more fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products
- Choosing foods that are low in fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol and do not contain *trans*-fat
- 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
- Eating disorders
- The Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Reducing sodium intake
- How to develop a plan and track progress toward achieving a personal goal to eat healthfully

[USDA's Team Nutrition](#) provides free nutrition education and promotion materials, including standards-based nutrition education curricula and lesson plans, posters, interactive games, menu graphics, and more.



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III. Physical Activity

Children and adolescents should participate in 60 minutes of physical activity every day. A substantial percentage of students' physical activity can be provided through a comprehensive, school-based Adaptive Physical Education Program that includes these components: adaptive physical education, open gym, classroom-based physical activity, walk and bicycle to school, and Special Olympic activities and the school is committed to providing these opportunities.

Physical activity during the school day (including but not limited to physical activity breaks, or adaptive physical education) **will not be withheld** as punishment for any reason

To the extent practicable, the school ensures that its grounds and facilities are safe and that equipment is available to students to be active. The maintenance department will conduct necessary inspections and repairs.

Adaptive Physical Education

The school will provide students with adaptive physical education, using an age-appropriate, sequential physical education curriculum consistent with national and state standards for physical education. The physical education curriculum will promote the benefits of a physically active lifestyle and will help students develop skills to engage in lifelong healthy habits, as well as incorporate essential health education concepts. All students will be provided equal opportunity to participate in adaptive physical education classes.

All students will receive adaptive physical education for at least 120 minutes per week throughout the school year.

The school's adaptive physical education program will promote student physical fitness through individualized fitness and activity assessments and will use objective and measurable reporting measures for each student.

Essential Physical Activity Topics in Health Education

The school will include in the health education curriculum the following essential topics on physical activity:

- How physical activity can contribute to a healthy weight
- The physical, psychological, or social benefits of physical activity
- How physical activity can contribute to the academic learning process
- How an inactive lifestyle contributes to chronic disease
- Health-related fitness, that is, cardiovascular endurance, muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility, and body composition
- 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



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- Preventing injury during physical activity
- Weather-related safety, for example, avoiding heat stroke, hypothermia, and sunburn while being physically active
- How much physical activity is enough, that is, determining frequency, intensity, time, and type of physical activity
- Developing an individualized physical activity and fitness plan
- Monitoring progress toward reaching goals in an individualized physical activity plan
- How to influence, support, or advocate for others to engage in physical activity
- How to resist peer pressure that discourages physical activity

Open Gym

The school will offer at least **30 minutes of open gym** on all or most days during the school year. If open gym is offered before lunch, schools will have appropriate hand-washing facilities and/or hand-sanitizing mechanisms to ensure proper hygiene prior to eating and students are required to use these mechanisms before eating.

Open gym will complement, not substitute, adaptive physical education class. Open gym supervising staff members will encourage students to be active, and will serve as role models by being physically active alongside the students whenever feasible.

Physical Activity Breaks

The School recognizes that students are more attentive and ready to learn if provided with periodic breaks when they can be physically active or stretch. Thus, students will be offered **periodic opportunities** to be active or to stretch throughout the day on all or most days during a typical school week. The school recommends teachers try to fit physical activity breaks into their classroom schedules and also recognizes that we are trying to teach certain students to request such breaks as an alternative to engaging in maladaptive behavior. These physical activity breaks will complement, not substitute, for adaptive physical education class, open gym, and student transition periods.

The school will provide resources and links to resources, tools, and technology with ideas for physical activity breaks. Resources and ideas are available through [USDA](#) and the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](#).

Before and After School Activities

The school offers opportunities for students to participate in physical activity both before and after the school day through a variety of methods. The school encourages students to be physically active before and after school by: Allowing for independent transitions to and from school whether by foot or bicycle and providing recreational activities after school coordinate by a recreation therapist as well as an after school club coordinator.



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IV. Other Activities that Promote Student Wellness

The school will integrate wellness activities across the entire school setting, not just in the cafeteria, and physical activity facilities. The school 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 student well-being, optimal development, and strong educational outcomes.

The school encourages teachers and residential staff members to coordinate content across curricular and adaptive living skill areas that promote student health. The school's nursing therapy and APE departments are our curriculum experts in this regard and should be consulted as needed.

All school-sponsored events will adhere to the wellness policy. All school-sponsored wellness events will include physical activity opportunities.

Community Partnerships

The school will maintain our relationship with the Bassett Hospital Pediatric group 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.

Community Health Promotion and Engagement

The school will promote to caregivers/families the benefits of and approaches for healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school year. Families will be informed and invited to participate in school-sponsored activities and will receive information about health promotion efforts.

As described in the "Community Involvement, Outreach, and Communications" subsection, the school will use electronic mechanisms (such as displaying notices on the company's website), to ensure that all families are notified of the school's wellness plan/policy and are offered opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities.

Staff Wellness and Health Promotion

Springbrook maintains an independent staff wellness committee that focuses on staff wellness issues, identifies and disseminates wellness resources, and performs other functions that support staff wellness in coordination with human resources staff. The subcommittee leader's name is Mitzi Sackett sackettm@springbrookny.org.



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Professional Learning

When feasible, the school 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 physical activity break opportunities). Professional learning will help school staff understand the connections between academics and health and the ways in which health and wellness are integrated into ongoing school reform or academic improvement plans/efforts.



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Appendix A: School Level Contacts

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¹⁴ Hillman C, Pontifex M, Castelli D, Khan N, Raine L, Scudder M, Drollette E, Moore R, Wu C-T, Kamijo K. *Effects of the FITKids randomized control trial on executive control and brain function.* Pediatrics 2014; 134(4): e1063-1071.