

School Meal Requirements

Providing meals to students has certain requirements all schools must comply by in order to get federal reimbursement. Below is a list of requirements per grade level for both breakfast and lunch. Of the food required, included fruits, vegetables, grains, meats or meat alternatives and fluid milk.

	Breakfast			Lunch		
	K-5	6-8	9-12	K-5	6-8	9-12
Food Components	Amount of Food (a) per Week (Minimum per Day)					
Fruit (cups) bc	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)	2.5 (0.5)	2.5 (0.5)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups) bc	0	0	0	3.75 (0.75)	3.75 (0.75)	5 (1)
Dark Green	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.5
Red/Orange	0	0	0	0.75	0.75	1.25
Beans/Peas (Legumes)	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.5
Starchy	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.5
Other	0	0	0	0.5	0.5	0.75
Grains (oz eq) d	7-10 (1)	8-10 (1)	59-10 (1)	8-9 (1)	8-10 (1)	12-12 (2)
Meats/ Meat Alternates (oz eq) e	0	0	0	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	10-12 (1)
Fluid milk (cups) f	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week						
Min-Max Calories (Kcal) gh	350-500	400-550	450-600	550-650	600-700	750-850
Saturated Fat (% of total calories) h	< 10	< 10	< 10	< 10	< 10	< 10
Sodium Target 1 (mg) hi	≤540	≤600	≤640	≤1,240	≤1,360	≤1,420
Trans fat hj	Nutrition label or manufacture specification much indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving.					

a Food items included in each group and subgroup and amount equivalents. Minimum creditable serving is 1/8 cup.

b One quarter cup of dried fruit counts as 1/2 cup of fruit; 1 cup of leafy greens counts as 1/2 cup of vegetables. No more than half of the fruit or vegetable offerings may be in the form of juice. All juice must be 100% full-strength.

c Schools must offer 1 cup of fruit daily and 5 cups of fruit weekly. Starchy vegetables can be served at any time during the week provided the menu planner offers at least 2 cups from the under consumed subgroups during that same week. Under consumed vegetable subgroups are the dark green, red/orange, legumes, and “other vegetables” subgroups, as defined in 7 CFR 210.10(c)(2)(iii).

d All grains must be whole-grain-rich. Exemptions are allowed as specified in 7 CFR 220.8(c)(2)(iv)(B). Schools may substitute 1 oz. eq. of meat/meat alternate for 1 oz. eq. of grains after the minimum daily grains requirement is met.

e There is no meat/meat alternate requirement.

f All fluid milk must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1 percent fat or less). Milk may be unflavored or flavored.

g The average daily calories for a 5-day school week must be within the range (at least the minimum and no more than the maximum values).

h Discretionary sources of calories (solid fats and added sugars) may be added to the meal pattern if within the specifications for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. Foods of minimal nutritional value and fluid milk with fat content greater than 1 percent milk fat are not allowed.

i Sodium Target 1 (shown) is effective from July 1, 2014 (SY 2014-2015) through June 30, 2019 (SY 2018-2019). For sodium targets due to take effect beyond SY 2018-2019, see 7 CFR 220.8(f)(3).

j Food products and ingredients must contain zero grams of trans fat (less than 0.5 grams) per serving.

School Meal Requirements

What is Offer Versus Serve?

Students can choose the foods they plan to eat, and decline other foods. Offer versus serve (OVS) reduces food waste and helps control costs. High schools must use OVS at lunch, but it's optional at breakfast. Elementary and middle schools can choose to use OVS or not. OVS is not used for snacks.

Food components: Schools must offer the required food components and amounts daily/weekly

- ▶ **Lunch:** 5 food components: Milk, Fruit, Vegetable, Grain, and Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA)
 - ▶ At lunch, students must choose at least 3 food components
- ▶ **Breakfast:** 3 food components: Milk, Fruit, Grain
 - ▶ At breakfast, students must choose at least 3 food items.
 - ▶ Students may choose to take one or more food items (foods) from each component.
 - ▶ EXAMPLE 1: Choose 1 item (grain) -bagel, cold cereal, or muffin
 - ▶ EXAMPLE 2: Choose up to 3 items (fruit) -½ cup peaches, ½ cup apple juice, fresh orange, fresh apple

General rules:

- ▶ At every meal, students must choose at least ½ cup of fruits and/or vegetables. However, they may decline other foods.
- ▶ Students must take the full planned serving size for each food chosen (except for ½ cup fruits/vegetables)

Meals are not reimbursable if they:

- ▶ Do not have at least 3 components/items; or
- ▶ Do not have at least ½ cup of fruits/vegetables
- ▶ OVS does not affect the meal price



Offer versus Serve

The 5 Meal Components for School Lunch

1 Meat or Meat Alternate 	2 Grain 	3 Fruit 	4 Vegetable 	5 Milk
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You choose **at least 3** including

- ½ cup of fruit or vegetable
- at least two other full components

For best nutrition, **choose all 5!**