

2023-2024 NUTRITION SERVICES

Breakfast/Lunch Program Information and Meal Purchasing Procedures

Welcome to the Columbia Public Schools' (CPS) Nutrition Services meal service! This document is meant to assist our families with understanding how the school district serves meals. Nutrition Services has a computerized cashiering system at all schools. All scholars enrolled in CPS are automatically assigned access to a scholar debit account to purchase and to pay for lunch, breakfast, and/or a la carte items. Money may be deposited into a scholar's account so that it is available each time a scholar eats and allows the scholar to move through the lines quickly. Scholars may choose to pay cash daily to our cashiers, however, scholars bringing cash to school is discouraged due to potential loss. Columbia Public Schools will not be responsible for any deposits or lost funds not given directly to the Nutrition Services Department whether cash or check. As a convenience, parents/guardians may view scholar purchases and deposit money online. Parents are welcome to eat with their children in the cafeteria (adult price \$2.70 for breakfast and \$4.95 for lunch)

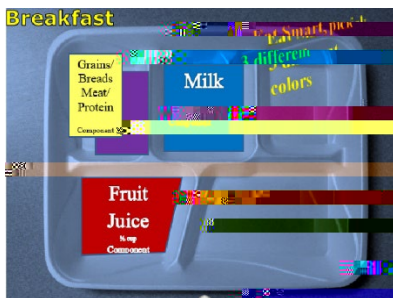
Parental/Guardian account access to child(ren) meal information:

- Parents/guardians may review and/or pay for scholar purchases online via the **School Café Family Hub:** family.schoolcafe.com/. School Café Family Hub is also available as an app in

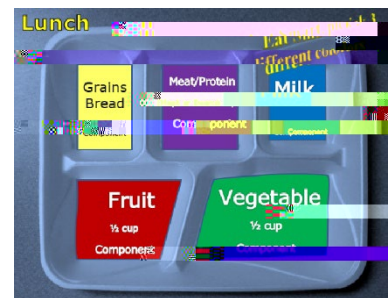
meal. Kindergarten scholars are encouraged to practice using their individual student identification number to move through the lunch lines efficiently.

All meals with a complete number of components are federally subsidized and therefore monitored for minimum amounts on a scholar's tray by the cashier. The following is a list of components:

- **Scholars must select 3 components at each meal:** During breakfast, 4 items are offered covering 3 components and during lunch 5 components are offered. Scholars may have all 4 for breakfast and all 5 for lunch. A mandatory component is a fruit or a vegetable. Without one, a scholar will not pass inspection for completeness and may be charged higher a la carte prices per item or sent back to obtain a missing component.

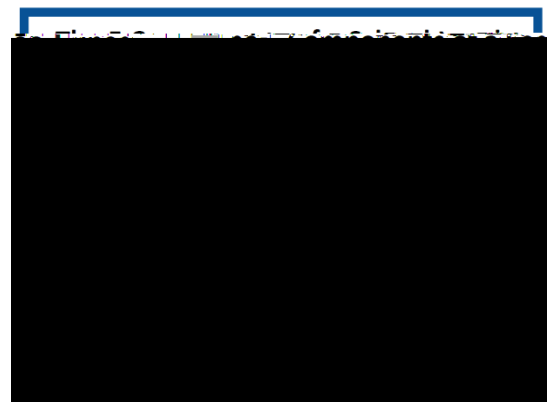
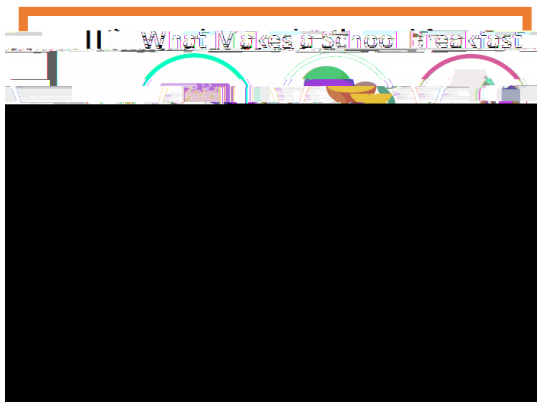


- Grains
- Meat/Protein
- Fruit
- Milk



These posters are found in all cafeterias to assist scholars with selections.

We offer 4 items at breakfast and 5 components/items at lunch. Scholars may refuse one at breakfast and 2 at lunch and it is called Offer vs. Serve. See graphics below:



Free, Reduced-Price and Full-Price Meals

Annually all households by regulation will receive a free and reduced-price application to the address or e-mail listed on file in our Student Information System (SIS). Applications for meal benefits must be submitted every year to maintain meal benefits from July 1 through June 30. Income guidelines change every July 1st. Eligibility begins as of the date parents place on the application or within 60 days of a federal claim if date is beyond 2 months. Applications are accepted all year long.

In school year 2023-2024, all scholars without prior approval of free meal benefits, when selecting a meal without money in their account, will have the full-price meal charge added to their account. Households are responsible for all scholar charges incurred prior to free meal benefit approval.

All households who apply for benefits will be notified by e-mail whether approved or denied. Households that haven't received an e-mail and e-mail of their results are encouraged to call Nutrition Services at 573-214-3480. If a scholar is missing from the meal benefit notification, contact Nutrition Services immediately to have that scholar added to the application to avoid unnecessary meal charges. All accumulated charges are the responsibility of the parent/guardian of the scholar. Columbia Public Schools reserves the right to pursue payment of unpaid charges with a third-party collection agency. Please see the new *Scholar Charges and Delinquent Meal Accounts* section for details.

Meal Prices are updated July 1st of every year, please visit the Nutrition Services' website for updates cpsk12.org/nutrition

Scholar Charges and Delinquent Meal Accounts and Charge Procedures

A complete lunch must consist of at least 3 of the 5 components offered: Whole Grains, Meat/Protein Substitute, Fruit, Vegetable, and Milk. A complete breakfast consists of 3 of 4 items offered: Grain or Protein item (2 offered daily), fruit/vegetable, and milk. All scholars are required to take a fruit or vegetable at both lunch and breakfast or will be charged a la carte prices. A la carte purchases are prohibited if a scholar does not have money in his or her account or if the account balance is negative. Milk or juice-only purchases are considered an a la carte purchase. Courtesy automated phone calls will also go out to all households with **any** negative meal account balances weekly.

Scholars who go through the meal line to obtain a complete meal will not be denied a meal for any reason. There is no alternate meal for delinquent accounts. All scholars receive the same meal choices regardless of account balance.

Special Note: Secondary scholars (grades 6-12) will be informed of their account balances upon request and/or if they inquire about why they are unable to obtain extra meal items due to account deficits.

: Scholars will be allowed to charge meals, however after the equivalent of 5 lunches and breakfasts combined an *additional* automated message is generated to all households with a deficit account balance of negative \$25.00. Accounts with any deficit are considered delinquent. Immediate payment in full is required to avoid further action.

All delinquent accounts exceeding a negative \$50.00 will be turned over to a third-party debt recovery service and is considered bad debt. Once delinquent debt is turned over to a debt recovery service, interest fees and court fees associated with lawsuits may be charged if bad debt is not resolved in a timely manner. Columbia Public Schools has chosen a debt recovery service that is sensitive to our families' needs and will set up a payment plan if needed.

Once a delinquent account is turned over to a 3rd party collection service, payments must be directed to the 3rd party service to avoid account confusion. Any payments made to Columbia Public Schools after being turned over to the 3rd party collection service will be added to the scholar's account for future purchases and **will not**

