

School Cafeteria Food Policies for 2024

1. Nutritional Standards

- **Balanced Meals:** All meals will include a balance of proteins, carbohydrates, fruits, vegetables, and dairy.
 - **Proteins:** At least 30-45 grams per meal.
 - **Carbohydrates:** 30-45 grams per meal, with a focus on complex carbohydrates.
 - **Fruits and Vegetables:** Minimum of 1 cup of vegetables and 1/2 cup of fruit per meal.
 - **Dairy:** At least 1 cup of milk or equivalent dairy product per meal.
- **Portion Control:** Serving sizes will adhere to age-appropriate guidelines to prevent overconsumption.
 - **Calories:** Meals will be designed to provide 750-900 calories each.
 - **Fat:** Total fat will not exceed 20% of total calories per meal.
- **Healthy Options:** Availability of low-sugar (less than 10 grams per serving), low-fat (less than 10 grams per serving), and whole grain options will be prioritized.
- **Fresh Ingredients:** Fresh fruits and vegetables will be used whenever possible, aiming for at least 80% fresh produce.

2. Allergen Management

- **Allergen Information:** Clear labeling of foods containing common allergens (nuts, dairy, gluten, soy, etc.) will be mandatory.
- **Allergy-Free Zones:** Designated allergy-free preparation and serving areas to prevent cross-contamination.
- **Staff Training:** Staff will be trained annually on handling food allergies and emergency response procedures.

3. Hygiene and Safety

- **Sanitization:** Regular sanitization of kitchen and dining areas, with a minimum of twice daily cleaning.
- **Temperature Control:** Proper temperature maintenance for storage, preparation, and serving of food to ensure safety.
 - **Hot Foods:** Maintain a temperature above 140°F (60°C).
 - **Cold Foods:** Maintain a temperature below 40°F (4°C).
- **Personal Hygiene:** Staff must follow strict personal hygiene practices, including regular hand washing and use of gloves.

4. Waste Management

- **Waste Reduction:** Implement programs to reduce food waste through portion control and student education on food conservation.
 - **Target:** Reduce food waste by 40% compared to the previous year.
- **Recycling:** Establish recycling bins for appropriate disposal of recyclable materials.
 - **Goal:** Recycle at least 80% of waste produced.

- **Composting:** Initiate a composting program for organic waste.

5. Menu Planning

- **Student Preferences:** Regular surveys and feedback mechanisms to incorporate student preferences and cultural dietary requirements.
- **Seasonal Menus:** Use of seasonal produce to ensure freshness and cost-effectiveness.
- **Special Diets:** Provision for vegetarian, vegan, and other special dietary needs.

6. Sustainability

- **Local Sourcing:** Preference for locally sourced ingredients to support the community and reduce the carbon footprint.
 - **Target:** Source at least 80% of ingredients locally.
- **Eco-Friendly Packaging:** Use of biodegradable or reusable packaging and utensils.

7. Pricing and Accessibility

- **Affordable Meals:** Ensure meal prices remain affordable for all students, with subsidies or free meals for low-income families.
 - **Price Range:** Meals priced between \$1 and \$2.
- **Equal Access:** No student will be denied a meal due to inability to pay; discreet policies will be in place to support students in need.

8. Education and Engagement

- **Nutritional Education:** Incorporate nutritional education into the curriculum to promote healthy eating habits.
 - **Programs:** Weekly workshops or classes on nutrition.
- **Student Involvement:** Engage students in menu planning and food policy decisions through a student food committee.

9. Monitoring and Compliance

- **Regular Audits:** Conduct regular audits to ensure compliance with food policies and standards.
 - **Frequency:** Bi monthly audits.
- **Feedback System:** Maintain a robust feedback system for students and parents to report concerns and suggestions regarding cafeteria services.

These policies aim to provide a healthy, safe, and inclusive dining environment for all students while promoting sustainability and nutritional education.