

## 5 Frequently Asked Questions About School Lunch

### 1. *How are menus planned?*

Menus are planned to provide students an opportunity to select nutritious foods that are enjoyable and healthy. The number of daily menu selections increase as students advance from elementary through high school. Standardized recipes are utilized to ensure that high quality meals are prepared. using food safety practices for preparing and serving food.

### 2. *Are school meals healthy?*

Yes! Menus are planned to meet the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans for key nutrients and calories for growing children. All foods served are steamed or oven baked to assure no additional fats are incorporated into the product. A variety of fresh fruits and vegetables are available daily in every school. The Government Accounting Office (GAO) reports that “children who eat school meals consume more fruits, vegetables, whole grains and dairy items than children who do not eat school meals.”

### 3. *Can schools serve anything they want?*

The School District of Haverford Township participates in the USDA School Meals Program. School Breakfast and School Lunch Programs and must meet the minimum meal pattern requirements for specific age groups. A basic lunch meal provides the following:

1 serving of meat or meat alternate, 1 serving whole grain bread or pasta, 1 serving of fruit, 1 serving of vegetable and 8 ounces of fluid milk.

Students **MUST** take a serving of fruit or vegetable. Lunch is designed to supply approximately 1/3 of the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for protein, calcium, iron, vitamins A and C, and the RDAs are based on weekly averages for nutrients. The nutritional value of the meals is calculated over a week’s period rather than the daily meal. This weekly method of calculating meals provides for greater flexibility in menu planning, and the USDA has daily and weekly minimums and maximums for fat, saturated fat, sodium and calories.

### 4. *How are portion sizes determined?*

The USDA establishes the minimum portion size for each meal pattern item (listed in question #3). Serving sizes are adjusted to meet the nutritional needs of students according to age: Grades K-5, Grades 6-8, and Grades 9-12.

### 5. *How are meal payments made?*

The food service department uses a computerized meal payment program. Prepayment is encouraged by using [www.school-café.com](http://www.school-café.com) (by credit or debit card). Prepayments can also be made through the food service manager in each school (by check or cash). Prepayment expedites the service through the serving line allowing students more time to eat. Students are identified by an ID # that is given to the student at the time of registration. The ID# remains with the student until the student graduates from SDHT.