

Milk Substitution Policy for Students

The USDA has established a milk substitution policy in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). Students taking advantage of these meal service programs are always offered the following components at each meal service: whole grains, protein (meat or meat alternative), fruits, vegetables, and milk. Students may choose three to five of these components, with at least one being a fruit and/or vegetable, to be counted as a full meal. Thus, students have the right to deny milk if they so choose due to religious or lifestyle choices.

However, if a student has a medical disability (such as lactose intolerance or a milk allergy), it is no longer allowable to *require* the student to decline the milk and must offer a comparable substitution in such cases. MVCSC will provide students who have a milk allergy/intolerance with soy milk, which is nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk. If your child needs a soy milk substitution due to a disability, please complete MVCSC's [Dietary Restriction Form](#). A medical statement signed by a health care provider with prescriptive authority is optional for soy milk requests and may be included with the form as additional documentation. However, if a substitution with anything other than soy milk is requested (i.e. juice), a signed medical statement is *required* and a [Milk Substitution Form](#) will need to be completed. If your child has a true milk allergy, a doctor's note should also be turned into the school nurse.

Furthermore, the USDA requires that free drinking water is made available to all students during meal service times. If a child denies the milk for whatever reason, they have access to water, free of charge, in the cafeteria. All students will be able to use the water fountains inside the cafeteria, or a Hydration Station with a water dispenser and cups will be set up inside the cafeteria. Bottled water will also be available for purchase a la carte and in vending machines.