

Policy

FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE LUNCHES/MILK
OFFER VERSUS SERVE

It is the policy of the board of education that this school district participate in any federal or state subsidized food program for the benefit of eligible pupils. Pupil eligibility shall be as determined by the guidelines of the subsidizing agency. The board requires that all regulations of the subsidizing agency be observed including and especially those which preserve the privacy of eligible pupils.

The board hereby adopts as its own the free and reduced-price policy developed by the bureau of child nutrition programs pursuant to federal regulations.

Breakfast After the Bell

If seventy percent or more of the students enrolled in any school within the district on or before the last school day before October 16 of the preceding school year are eligible for free or reduced price meals under the National School Lunch Program or the Federal School Breakfast Program, the district shall establish a "Breakfast After the Bell" program for that school in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:33-11.3

A school within the district may request a one-year waiver from their requirements to provide "Breakfast After the Bell" under certain circumstances set forth N.J.S.A. 18A:33-12.

Offer Versus Serve Breakfast and Lunch

A. Breakfast

All school breakfasts eligible for Federal reimbursement shall offer four food items from the three food components in the appropriate amounts per grade grouping:

1. Fruit or vegetable or juice;
2. Milk; and
3. Grains (including optional meat/meat alternate).

Students shall be permitted to decline one of the four food items offered. A student's decision to accept all four food items or to decline one food item shall not affect the price charged for the meal as the breakfast is priced as a unit. If students do not choose enough food items to comprise a reimbursable meal, a la carte prices will be charged.

B. Lunch

A school lunch eligible for Federal reimbursement shall offer five food components in the appropriate amounts per grade grouping:

1. Fruit;
2. Vegetable;
3. Milk;
4. Grain; and
5. Meat/Meat Alternate.

Students shall be permitted to decline two of the five required food components, but must select at least a half cup of either fruit (or fruit combination) or a half cup of vegetable (or vegetable combination) or half cup of a fruit/vegetable combination. After selecting the half cup fruit or vegetable requirement, students must select at

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least two additional full components in the full amounts (per age/grade grouping required amounts) to count toward the reimbursable offer versus serve meal.

The student's decision to accept all five food components or to decline two food components shall not affect the price charged for the meal as the lunch is priced as a unit. If students do not choose enough food items to comprise a reimbursable meal, a la carte prices will be charged.

School staff members shall not require a child to take a particular food component. It is the student's choice to select the components of the reimbursable meal.

Food service staff members will be trained annually on the provisions of the district's lunch and breakfast offer versus serve policy.

Adopted: August 20, 1996, June 16, 2015
Revised: August 16, 2016
NJSBA Review/Update: March 2016
Readopted: April 8, 2020
Revised: May 3, 2023, October 8, 2025
Readopted: June 14, 2023, November 12, 2025

Legal References: N.J.S.A. 18A:33-3 Cafeterias for pupils
N.J.S.A. 18A:33-4 School lunch; availability to all children
N.J.S.A. 18A:33-5 Exemptions
N.J.S.A. 18A:33-10 Establishment of school breakfast program in certain schools
N.J.S.A. 18A:33-11 Implementation of school breakfast program by district
N.J.S.A. 18A:58-7.1 School lunch program
through -7.2
N.J.A.C. 2:36-1.2 Policy and agreement for school nutrition programs
N.J.A.C. 2:36-1.9 Review and evaluation

**Mandated only if the district wishes to do it.

Key Words

Free Lunch, School Lunch, Lunch, Milk, Reduced-price Lunches/Milk, Offer versus Serve