



The Healthy Family Newsletter

A Newsletter from the Food and Nutrition Service Department
Willmar Public Schools and Community Christian School

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September Highlights

Willmar

- 8/31 First Day: 6th-12th grade
- 9/2 First Day: K-5th grade
- 9/7 No School: Labor Day
- 9/8 First Day Preschool

Community Christian School

- 8/31 First Day: 6th-12th grade
- 9/7 No School: Labor Day
- 9/8 First Day: 1st-5th Grade
- 9/9 First Day Kindergarten



Help Wanted! To Serve our Future Leaders

No weekends, holidays, or evenings! Shifts vary anywhere from 7:00am-2:00pm (depending on district and building site). Apply at your school district, online or scan the QR code below.



**This Institution is an
Equal Opportunity
Provider.**

✓ Check out the
Breakfast and Lunch
Menus on your
District's Website

Welcome Back, Students!

We hope you had a fantastic summer vacation and are excited to begin the 2026–2027 school year! We encourage all students to take advantage of the meal and snack programs available at school to help support learning, growth, and success both in the classroom and at home. Below is an overview of Willmar Public School Food and Nutrition Services program for the upcoming school year.

Free Meals for the 2026–2027 School Year

Minnesota's Free School Meals Program remains in effect for the 2026–2027 school year. All students may receive one **FREE** breakfast and one **FREE** lunch each school day. Please note: Additional meals, à la carte items, snacks, and milk-only purchases are not included in the free meal program and will have an associated cost.

Why Complete the Application for Educational Benefits?

Even though meals are free, families are strongly encouraged to complete the Application for Educational Benefits. Completing the application may help qualify families and schools for additional benefits, including:

- Reduced fees for athletics, activities, AP, SAT, and ACT testing
- Eligibility for discounted internet services
- Sun Bucks
- Free or reduced-cost preschool and early childhood programs
- Additional state and federal funding for school programs

Applications are available online through the Willmar Public Schools website or in person at the WEAC District Office. Community Christian School has copies in their front office as well. Applications expire each year. Families are encouraged to complete a new application each school year and submit a Waiver of Confidentiality form along with the application.

Meal Options and Availability

All school buildings will continue to offer a variety of nutritious hot and cold breakfast and lunch options that meet USDA meal pattern requirements for grades PK–12. Menu offerings may vary by school building and grade level, but our commitment to providing balanced, appealing, and healthy meals remains a top priority.

For the 2026–2027 school year, new breakfast options will be available for middle school and high school students. Students looking for a quick and convenient option can enjoy the new Protein Power Packs, designed as a nutritious grab-and-go breakfast choice packed with protein to help fuel their morning. In addition, students will be able to enjoy new hot Protein-rich Breakfast Bowls featuring hearty ingredients and protein-packed options to help keep them energized and ready to learn throughout the school day. Stay tuned for new menus coming soon.

Menus will continue to include a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein options to encourage healthy eating habits and provide students with meals they enjoy.



Attention Parents:

Parents may request lactose-free, lactose-reduced, or soy milk without a Special Diet Statement, as these options provide nutrients equivalent to cow's milk.

If your child needs another non-dairy milk substitute (such as almond milk) due to a medical condition, a Special Diet Statement form must be completed and signed by a licensed medical provider.

Food Allergies:

*If your child has a food allergy, please reach out to your school nurse or the Food and Nutrition Services Department with any questions.

*The dietary statement does not have to be renewed each year as long as there are no changes.



Preparing Your Student for a Positive Meal Experience Each Day!

Food and Nutrition Services suggest that you sit down and review the monthly Breakfast and Lunch menu with your child. After talking about it, come to an agreement for each meal and have your child circle the selections.

Studies have shown that when you involve children in the decision making process, they are much more likely to actually perform the desired activity. In this case, that means selecting their own healthy meals and enjoying it when they get to eat at school each day!

2026-2027 MEAL PRICES:

Willmar

	Breakfast	Lunch
K-5	Free	Free
6-8	Free	Free
9-12	Free	Free
Adult	\$2.55	\$5.30
Milk	\$0.75	\$0.75

Community Christian School

	Breakfast	Lunch
K-5	Free	Free
6-8	Free	Free
9-12	Free	Free
Adult	\$2.65	\$5.40
Milk	\$0.75	\$0.75

*Adult Meal Prices are subject to change.

NATIONAL FOOD SAFETY MONTH TIPS:

SEPARATE:

Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from fresh produce and cooked food



CLEAN:

Wash hands, utensils, and surfaces often



COOK:

Use a food thermometer to make sure foods are cooked to a safe temperature



CHILL:

Refrigerate Perishable foods and leftovers within two hours

SOURCE: FOODSAFETY.GOV

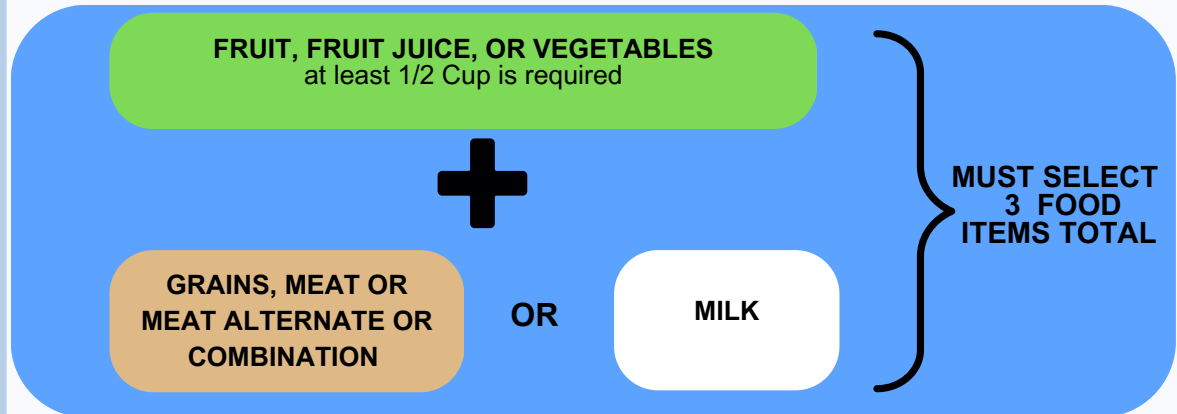
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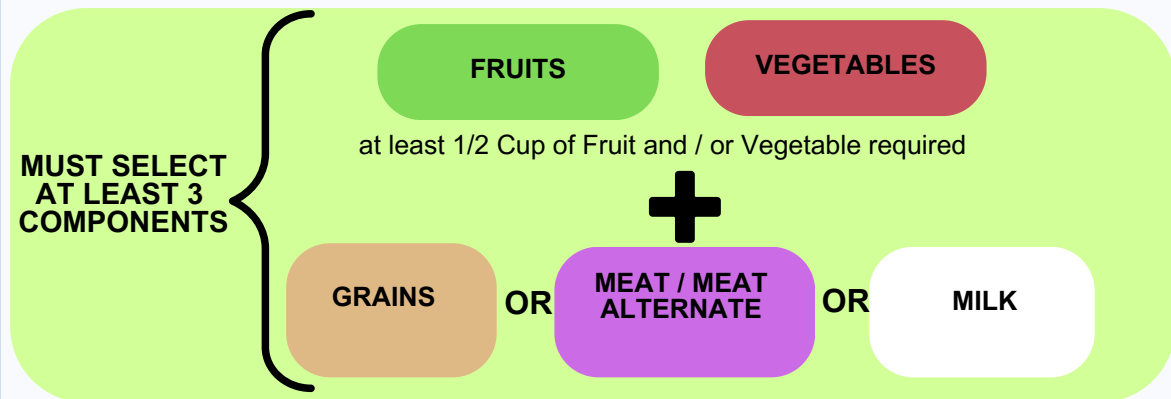
OFFER VERSE SERVE

What does this mean?

BREAKFAST FOOD ITEMS:



LUNCH COMPONENTS:



The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act requires that students must select at least 1/2 cup of fruit and/or vegetable at Breakfast in addition to other food items to receive a free breakfast. Each student may select a full meal of all items being offered at breakfast.

Each student has the right to decline certain food items at Breakfast and Lunch; however, it is required that the student takes the minimum of 1/2 Cup of fruit and/or vegetables.

At lunch, every student may select a minimum of three components from the five that are available at Lunch. A food component is one of the required food groups (fruit, vegetable, grains, meat/meat alternate and choice of milk). All meal options provided at each building are free. Please call with any questions or have your students ask the cashier.

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BREAKFAST ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO THRIVE!



TOP 5 REASONS TO EAT BREAKFAST AT SCHOOL

- Fuels the brain to help it get focused for learning
- Packs a nutritional punch and guaranteed to have whole grains, fruit, and milk
- Convenient, easy, and no cost to the parents
- Time to catch up with friends
- Good breakfast=Good mood

