

**CALHOUN COUNTY  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM  
PROCEDURES MANUAL**

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## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Procedures Manual is to provide faculty and staff with information regarding the School Breakfast, School Lunch, USDA Competitive Food Regulations, and the guidelines and procedures regarding the Child Nutrition Program (CNP) Department.

The CNP Department appreciates the assistance of all faculty and staff in following these guidelines to ensure compliance with State and Federal requirements. Please feel free to print any of the information and forms offered in this section. This document and any necessary revisions are available upon request.

We welcome all comments and suggestions. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact the Child Nutrition Program at (256) 741-7422.

## SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

The School Breakfast Program (SBP) is a federally subsidized meal program administered by Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) and operating in public schools. This program provides low cost nutritionally balanced meals to all students each school day. The program was established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 1966 to ensure all children have access to a healthy breakfast at school to promote learning readiness and healthy eating behaviors.

Regulations require that all meals meet the recommendations of the *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. These meals must meet dietary specifications for calories and specific macro and micronutrients.

### BREAKFAST SERVICE METHOD

Calhoun County Schools offer breakfast through a traditional Offer vs. Serve (OVS) service. The goal of OVS is to reduce food waste while allowing students to choose the foods they want to eat. Everyone plays a role. When students and cafeteria staff understand OVS, breakfast lines move smoothly, allowing students to make the most of meal time and enjoy the wholesome and appealing foods they are served. It also helps reduce overall food costs.

Under OVS at breakfast, schools must offer at least four food items from the three required food components (fruit, grains, and fluid milk\*). \*Water does not count as one of the three required food components and cannot be served as a substitute for milk.

- A **food component** is one of three required food groups in a reimbursable breakfast. These are fruits, grains, and fluid milk\*.
- A **food item** is a specific food offered within the three food components, for example, 2 slices of whole grain-rich bread, 1 cup of grapes, and 1 cup of milk. This meal meets OVS breakfast requirements because three food components and four food items are offered.

Students must select at least three of the four offered food items under OVS at breakfast, including at least ½ cup of fruit and/or vegetable.

#### Optional Components at Breakfast

##### **Vegetables**

- Vegetables may be offered as a substitute for fruits.

##### **Meats/Meat Alternates**

- A meat/meat alternate may be served to meet the weekly grain requirement, as long as a 1 oz eq minimum of grains is offered daily.

- A meat/meat alternate may also be offered as an “extra” food (not credited toward meal pattern requirements) if a reimbursable meal is selected.

Adults and visitors are welcome to participate in the breakfast program and will be charged based on the most recent meal price schedule, as approved by the Calhoun County Schools Board of Education. Adults must prepay or pay onsite at the time of service.

## NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is a federally subsidized assisted meal program administered by ALSDE. NSLP provides nutritionally balanced lunches to students based on their eligibility status. School Food Authorities (SFAs) that choose to participate in the NSLP receive reimbursement from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for each lunch they serve. In return, SFAs must serve lunches that meet the meal pattern requirements. NSLP lunches must meet the regulations outlined in the final rule (77 FR 4088) titled *Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs* as a result of the *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act in 2010* and the *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The meal pattern outlined in this rule is food-based and divided by age/grade groups. The meal pattern focuses on specific nutrient standards: calories, sodium, saturated fat and trans fat.

Adopting the meal pattern results in the following changes:

- Required daily servings of fruit
- Required daily servings of vegetables plus a weekly requirement for *Dark Green*, *Red/Orange*, *Beans/Pea* (legumes), *Starchy*, and *Other Vegetable* subgroups.
- Increased quantities of fruits and vegetables.
- Weekly meat/meat alternate ranges plus a daily requirement.
- Weekly grain ranges plus daily minimum requirements. All grains offered are whole-grain rich.
- Fat-free (unflavored or flavored) milk only.
- Under Offer versus Serve (OVS), the student must select at least ½ cup of the fruit and/or the vegetable component to be considered a reimbursable meal.
- Calorie minimum and maximum levels based on age/grade groups.
- Sodium limits.
- Limit on saturated fat, elimination of trans fat.

Calhoun County Schools operates OVS for all grades, PK-12th. Under OVS, students must select three meal components to ensure they get the nutritional benefits of a meal. OVS is not required for meals offered as part of field trips or for any other meals served away from the school campus.

Schools must offer all five food components in at least the minimum required quantities:

- A **food component** is one of five required food groups in reimbursable lunches. These are meats/meat alternates, grains, fruits, vegetables, and fluid milk\*. \*Water does not count as one of the three required food components and cannot be served as a substitute for milk.
- A **food item** is a specific food offered within the five food components. For example, spaghetti (whole grain-rich pasta with tomato sauce) is one food item that contains a grain and a vegetable component.

The required five food components must be offered for school lunch. Students must select at least three of the five required food components, including at least ½ cup of fruit and/or vegetable, to have a reimbursable lunch. See the *Required Food Components* table for a listing of required food components and their minimum quantities that must be offered. Meats/meat alternates and grains are measured in ounce equivalents (oz eq is considered the amount of food product that is equal to 1 ounce).

Required Food Component	Daily Minimum Requirements for Each Grade Level			
	K-5	6-8	K-8	9-12
Vegetables	¾ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
Fruits	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup
Grains	1 oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq	2 oz eq
Meats/Meat Alternates	1 oz eq	1 oz eq	1 oz eq	2 oz eq
Fluid Milk*	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup

Students are charged based on their meal eligibility status.

Adults and visitors are welcome to participate in the lunch program and will be charged based on the most recent meal price schedule, as approved by the Calhoun County Schools Board of Education. Adults must prepay or pay onsite at the time of service. Charging is not allowed for adult meals.

# HOUSEHOLD SCHOOL MEAL APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Regardless of prior school year meal status, each year, parents and/or guardians must complete the necessary household school meal application to apply for free or reduced-price meals unless a person in the household meets the criteria for categorical eligibility. Failure to submit a new school year application by the beginning of year 30-Day grace period could result in loss of free or reduced priced meal status. When a household submits a household school meal application, all the students in the household are included in that school meal application. It is not required that parents or guardians complete a household school meal application or a separate household school meal application for each student or by eligibility category.

## **Household School Meal Application Distribution**

Household school meal applications are provided to every student. Household school meal applications and letters may be distributed by mail, email, or sent home with students. Meal applications may be completed and submitted online or by paper.

## **Required Applicant Income Information**

For households that apply for free or reduced-price meals based on household income, the household must provide the following information in order for the SFA to determine eligibility:

1. Names of all household members.
2. Amount, frequency, and source of current income for each household member reported in whole dollars.
3. Last 4 digits of the Social Security number of the adult household member who signs the household school meal application or another adult member of the household or an indication that no adult household member has a social security number.
4. Signature of an adult household member attesting that the information provided is correct.

## Unpaid Meal Charges

The Alabama State Department of Education Child Nutrition Programs Division has provided guidance for unpaid meals. Calhoun County Schools' procedures are developed in accordance with this guidance, along with pertinent state and federal regulations.

Uncollected cafeteria charges constitute a bad debt and are not allowed. Extra servings and à la carte purchases are not allowed when a meal account has a negative balance. The parent/guardian of any student who purchases foods and beverages from the Child Nutrition Program is required to provide funds through the meal account and is responsible for resolving all negative balances immediately.

All parents/guardians in the school system are encouraged to create a user account in our online payment system. Within the online payment system, parents have the option to create low balance notifications in order to resolve low balance issues before a student's account reaches a negative balance. Parents can set low balance notification thresholds based on personal preference.

Parents may provide their own child with breakfast, lunch or snacks.

### **BAD DEBT**

The Child Nutrition Program will not incur a bad debt as a result of an uncollectible worthless check or unpaid meal charges. In the event worthless checks or unpaid meal charges are presented to the Child Nutrition Program are uncollectible, the individual schools will be responsible for the reimbursement.

At the end of each fiscal and school year, all unpaid meal charges will be reconciled by the individual schools to close out any bad debt expenses incurred. Evidence is to be maintained at the school level demonstrating efforts made attempting to collect unpaid meal charges throughout the school year, results of those efforts whether successful or unsuccessful, financial documentation showing when the unpaid meal charges became an operating loss, and documentation of non federal funds being used to close out bad debt for the Child Nutrition Program.

# SACK LUNCHES

## **PROCEDURE FOR ORDERING SACK LUNCHES:**

We receive many requests for sack meals to be prepared for field trips and special activity days at school. Students are charged meals based on their eligibility status. Proper record keeping is required for sack meals as with any other type of meal service. Documentation required includes accurate meal counts taken at the point of service and food production records.

The main objective is to ensure that each student served receives a high quality, safe, reimbursable sack meal. The need for continued safe food handling practices after the meals leave the food service area of operation must be emphasized.

### **Two Weeks in Advance**

Teacher in charge will communicate with the cafeteria manager from the cafeteria that will be providing the meals two weeks in advance. The manager will determine how many meals are needed and document how many students will be off campus this day to avoid food waste. This request should be submitted two weeks prior to the event to guarantee availability of menu items requested.

### **Day of Field Trip**

Sack meals will be available for pick up the morning of the field trip. Sack lunches will be packed in coolers if needed. The coolers (if used and belong to CNP) are to be returned to the cafeteria upon return to school.

### **Morning of the Request**

The teacher responsible for the field trip will come to the cafeteria with the children needing meals and pick up sack meals. Those students will then be charged for their meals.

# SPECIAL DIETS

Any student with a medically diagnosed food allergy and who needs special dietary accommodations will need to have their state licensed healthcare professional complete a "Diet Prescription for Meals at School" form. This form, once completed, will need to be returned to the school where a copy is kept in the nurse's office as well as the cafeteria manager's office. Anyone needing a Diet Prescription For School Meals at School form can be found at their local SFA nurses office.

## **PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING SPECIAL DIET MODIFICATIONS**

- Parents of children requiring special diet modifications will submit a Diet Prescription for Meals at School form completed and signed by a licensed physician, licensed physician's assistant, or nurse practitioner.
- The campus nurse will forward the signed medical form to the CNP cafeteria manager.
- CNP staff shall make food substitutions or accommodations for students as outlined in the diet prescription form.
- Substitutions for students with food allergies or sensitivities shall be based on a prescription written by a licensed physician.
- Under no circumstances is school CNP staff to revise or change a diet prescription or medical order.
- The CNP manager shall ensure that children with Special Dietary Needs are served the appropriate diet.
- When uncertainty arises or the diet cannot be located, the manager shall notify the Child Nutrition Director and the school nurse so that a diet plan may be formulated.
- If the parents or students cannot provide CNP with a current physician statement, a special diet shall not be provided.
- All diet prescription for meals at school must be renewed annually.
- This documentation is required to justify that the modified meal is “reimbursable”, as defined by federal guidelines, and to ensure any meal modifications meet nutrition standards that are medically appropriate for the student.

## **OTHER OPERATIONAL ISSUES**

### **EQUAL ACCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS**

When planning for special functions, parties, field trips, etc. The Child Nutrition Program should be involved in the process to ensure that students are not denied meals and that meals claimed for reimbursement meet requirements. For instance, when field trips are planned, the Child Nutrition Program can provide sack lunches for those students that request one. By allowing all students to request a lunch if desired, overt identification by income status is prevented. All cafeterias must have available Justice for All Posters.

### **DENIAL OF MEALS AS A DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

USDA policy prohibits the denial of meals as a disciplinary action against any student who is enrolled in a school participating in the Food and Nutrition program. Disciplinary action which

indirectly results in the loss of meals is allowable (e.g., a student is suspended from school). When the withholding of meals is the disciplinary action or if the disciplinary action directly results in the loss of meals (e.g. lunch detention), it is inconsistent with the law and is not allowable. Teachers must be trained that students must be allowed access to all meal items offered regardless of behavior or conduct. Students in ISS eating in a different location or during a different time as the rest of the student population, may receive an alternate menu meeting all Federal meal requirements but may not be denied meals.

### **USDA Nondiscrimination Statement**

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity\* and sexual orientation\*), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: [USDA](#)

[Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#)  from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **Mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue,  
SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **Fax:** (202) 690-7442; or
3. **Email:** [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

\*The enclosed “non discrimination” language herein was added pursuant to the May 5, 2022, USDA memorandum. However, although included as currently required for audit compliance by the USDA, the State of Alabama objects to its **inclusion**, **applicability** and the **application** of this language due to currently pending legal challenges in the matter of *The State of Tennessee, et al. v. USDA, et al.*, Case No. 3:22-cv-00257, and may be subject to change or removal.

### **REGULATIONS REGARDING DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

When considering a disciplinary action against any student, school officials must ensure that such action is consistent with the above policy and must make a reimbursable meal available to any child attending school who, for disciplinary reasons, is not allowed to eat in the cafeteria.

### **OFFER VERSUS SERVE IN DISCIPLINARY SITUATIONS**

If the meal is prepackaged, the offer versus serve provision does not apply. However, students must be allowed to choose from a selection of either flavored or unflavored milk.

### **ADEQUATE MEAL SERVICE PERIODS**

USDA encourages schools to make every effort to establish meal periods that are long enough for children to fully consume their meals and to provide an environment conducive to eating those meals. It is important, both nutritionally and socially, to give children sufficient time, a conducive atmosphere, and a safe environment to eat nutritious meals. At a minimum students must be given 10 minutes after meal service to consume breakfast and 20 minutes after meal service to consume lunch.

### **MEAL TIMES FOR BREAKFAST AND LUNCH**

Regular times specified in regulations for the NSLP have been identified as 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Breakfast hours would be identified as meal service prior to 10 a.m. in most circumstances. Campuses are encouraged to allow students to eat breakfast when they are late arriving at school. However, this is not a requirement.

### **EQUIPMENT USE**

Equipment used for the Child Nutrition Programs shall be used by the SFA in the program(s) that it was acquired for as long as needed. When equipment is no longer needed for the program, the equipment may be used in other USDA programs, provided the use will not interfere with the work/program for which the equipment was originally acquired. First preference shall be given to other USDA programs for use. If acquiring replacement

equipment, the SFA may use the equipment to be replaced as a trade-in or sell the property and use the proceeds to offset the cost of the replacement property.

### **SECOND SERVINGS OR MEALS TO STUDENTS**

Federal regulations governing the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs prohibit the reimbursement for second meals. The regulation states that production and participation records must be planned with the objective of providing one reimbursable breakfast and lunch per child per day. Therefore, all students may purchase a second tray at the full price or purchase second servings at the a la carte prices.

### **ADULT MEAL PRICING**

Federal commodities and federal reimbursement funds are designated to provide meals for students only. The federal government sets reimbursement rates for student meals only. It does not provide funds or USDA Food Commodities for adult meals. Therefore, we must charge adults in order not to compromise food and nutrition program funds.

### **WELLNESS PLAN**

Our Comprehensive Wellness Plan consists of three major areas focusing on nutrition, physical fitness/health, and health services and is posted on our website under the documents section of the Child Nutrition Department.

## **FINANCIAL OPERATIONS**

### **Cash Management for Federal Funds**

The Chief School Financial Officer will maintain financial records that account for the receipt, obligation, and expenditure of each federal program fund. Cash balances for each federal program fund and for the aggregate of all federal program funds will be monitored by the Chief School Financial Officer or designee.

### **Determination of Allowable Costs**

Before instituting a financial transaction that will require the expenditure of federal funds the federal program director and the Chief School Financial Officer or designee will determine that the proposed transaction meets the requirements for allowable costs for the federal program. Actions to determine allowable costs will assure that:

- The proposed expenditure is reasonable and necessary for the federal program;
- The proposed expenditure is consistent with procedures for financial transactions of the board including:
  - Purchase order approval procedures
  - Contract review and approval procedures
  - Applicable competitive purchasing procedures
  - Documentation supports the allowability of transactions.

Before payments are made from federal funds the federal program director and the Chief School Financial Officer or designee will determine that the federal program expenditure complies with generally accepted accounting principles and complies with state, local, and federal laws, rules, and regulations.

### **Procurement Plan**

It is the policy of the Calhoun County Board of Education to encourage free and open competition in the purchase of all goods and services. In order to facilitate the implementation of this policy, all food products purchased by CNP, other than items in the general category of fresh produce, will be purchased by local and/or state bid.

Bids for food and supply categories not covered by state bid will be issued under the direction of the Superintendent on an annual basis.

CNP managers will be given a list of successful bidders with other instructions by the CNP Director before the beginning of each school year. All purchases for bid items should be purchased from the designated successful bidder. In the event of temporary mark-outs, a manager may accept substitutes of equal or greater value. In the event of permanent mark-outs, the CNP Director will determine an alternate source. New products introduced by vendors may be purchased with the stipulation that a record will be maintained and reported to the CNP Director on a monthly basis. New items having merit may be routinely added to the bid list whenever the bid process is next conducted. Procurement of services rendered to CNP operations will be bid or negotiated depending upon the nature of the services and the sources of availability.

Employees of the Calhoun County Board of Education shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from vendors or any party doing business with the Calhoun County Board of Education or its subsidiary schools.

## **VERIFICATION OF DAILY CNP INCOME**

CNP shall implement a system of verifying daily income at local school points of sale. The procedure shall require that at least two local CNP employees, as assigned by the CNP director, be included in the verification process. The computer at each point of sale will generate a printout at the end of each day indicating the number of meals served by category and the calculated cash received for the day. Payments collected for the day will be verified against the amount reflected by the computer printout. Reports shall be submitted on a weekly basis to the Central Office CNP staff.