

August 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We can't wait to welcome students back to the cafeteria for the 2024-25 school year! We wanted to share a few things you and your child can look forward to when it comes to mealtime, including information about meal pricing, steps to apply for free and reduced-price meals, how we manage food allergies and the documentation needed, and an inside look at the new recipes, concepts, and programs we'll be introducing this fall.

Food Kids Love to Eat

We are working to bring even more variety to our menus featuring new recipes with kid-approved foods. The value of school lunch is top of mind as families continue to experience inflation and growing food costs at home. In addition to giving kids the chance to try new foods, school lunch provides students with healthy, balanced, and safe meals at an affordable price, while saving families time and stress.

Meal Cost and Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications

For the 2024-25 school year, breakfast will again be FREE for all students and lunch prices remain the same as last year. Free or Reduced-Price Meals are available again this year to students who qualify for these benefits.

We encourage all families, regardless of income, to complete and submit a short, confidential school meal application prior to the start of the school year to ensure that there are no gaps in meal benefits for students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Please visit the department website for instructions [HERE](#).

Food Allergies and Special Dietary Needs

We recognize the importance of supporting students and families who manage food allergies and medical conditions that require a modification to their menu, and we are committed to providing safe meals for all students.

We coordinate with families and school nurses in the food allergy and medical conditions protocol. Please visit the department website for more information [HERE](#). If you have any questions or concerns regarding your student's allergies or dietary needs, please don't hesitate to reach out to Gwyn Jones, MPH, RD, gjones@soudertonsd.org.

Programs that Encourage Fun and Discovery

We hope to inspire healthy eating habits and spark a culinary curiosity to last a lifetime through fun and engaging programs, including:

- **At the High School:**
 - **Global Eats:** Highlighting the unique ingredients and authentic flavors from cuisines around the world, Global Eats brings a world of flavors to the cafeteria. Our newest signature program takes students on a food exploration that celebrates cultural heritages, traveling through China, Italy, Mexico, Korea, and the Caribbean.
- **At the Secondary Schools:**
 - **Student Choice:** Giving middle and high school students a voice in deciding what food concepts are featured and new menu items that will be available, Student Choice brings the latest food trends to school menus.

- **At the Elementary Schools:**
 - **Discovery Kitchen:** Designed to make nutrition education fun and entertaining, Chartwells chefs and dietitians have worked together to create curriculums that get kids trying new foods and learning about what they're eating. Each month has a different theme, and activities will be adapted for the current meal programs.
 - **Mood Boost:** This innovative program helps elementary students connect what they eat with how they feel. It features recipes and characters that focus on six moods: Smart, Happy, Confident, Alert, Strong, and Calm.

Menus and Nutrition Facts at Your Fingertips

Through Nutrislice, an innovative app, students, parents, and faculty have access to school menus, including nutrition information, allergens, and photos. Nutrislice can be downloaded for free from the App Store (iOS) or Google Play (Android) and is available on desktop and mobile devices. Menus are also available [HERE](#).

Celebrating Our School Lunch Heroes

As kids advance from grade to grade with new classes and different teachers, the dedicated lunch ladies and men in the school cafeteria are one constant throughout the academic journey. Throughout the school year, these heroes of the cafeteria are dedicated to making mealtime a bright spot in a student's day, ensuring kids throughout the Souderton community are served nourishing meals. Students need a place to eat where they can connect with others, recharge, and enjoy a sense of happiness with their classmates. It is our goal to create that experience for all students.

Through sharing our passion for great-tasting food, instilling a desire for food discovery, and most importantly, providing nourishing meals, we're excited to continue serving up happy and healthy to your children in the year ahead.

We love hearing from parents, and your feedback is important to us. Please reach out to our team with any questions or comments. We look forward to a great school year!

Thank you,
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