

Food and Nutrition Services FAQ's 2021-22

All meals are free for the 2021-22 school year! What does this mean for Jeffco Families?

Jeffco will provide all **breakfast and lunch meals** to students at **no cost** at school sites who participate in the school meal program.

- One breakfast and one lunch meal daily will be free to students. Second entrees plus other a la carte items may be purchased with cash or using a student's [School Café](#) account.
- Adult meals are available for \$4.15

If all meals are free, do I need to complete a new Free and Reduced Meal Application?

Yes. All families who believe they may qualify for free and reduced meals should still complete a free and reduced meal application to receive potential **fee waivers**, to receive **P-EBT benefits** and to ensure some schools receive **proper funding**. Online applications on [School Café](#) are processed quickest.

Where will meals be served this year?

Students will go through the serving line in the cafeteria to receive meals (except for schools who participate in Breakfast in the Classroom) and meals will be eaten in the cafeteria. There may be a small number of exceptions to this service model, but most meals will not be served in the classroom.

Does Food and Nutrition Services operate as a for-profit program?

No. Food and Nutrition Services is a **non-profit program** that is a **self-sustaining fund** operating within Jeffco Schools. Food and Nutrition Services focuses on **sustainability not profit**.

- While profit is not the goal, to remain sustainable, the department must operate with business principles in mind and balance revenue with expenses.
- Both meal participation and a la carte contribute to the financial sustainability of the school meal program.
- Any profit seen at the end of year is invested back into the meal program.

Does Food and Nutrition Services address community food insecurity?

Yes. The school meal program is essential to addressing **food insecurity** through a variety of programs and the department must remain sustainable to ensure **all students** in Jeffco have **access to healthy meals** that allow them to learn.



- Food and Nutrition Services participates in the following programs to give access to healthy foods – Breakfast, Lunch, Afterschool Snack, Summer Foodservice Program and the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.

How do you determine the type of meal service in Jeffco Schools?

*Jeffco Schools Nutrition Services provides healthy breakfast and lunch meals considering USDA nutritional policies, the available **budget**, availability of **necessary equipment**, ability to **properly staff kitchens** and the ability to **provide consistent and equitable service** across the district.*

- To equitably serve our community and receive the best pricing on food items, consistent menus are implemented across the district.
- FNS balances its menu offerings between semi-scratch items and items that require less labor to prepare understanding that staffing is, and always be, both a concern and priority.
- A fully scratch made menu is not always possible when kitchen equipment is not consistent and when staffing shortages are present.
- The menu is developed with input from an Executive Chef, Registered Dietitian, Student Testing and a Department Advisory Committee.

What makes a reimbursable meal?

A reimbursable meal consists of food components that reflect the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (2020-2025) and food groups that ensure a variety of nutrients are provided to all students.

- Fruit, Vegetable, Protein, Grain, Milk components are offered to all students at lunch. A student may take between three and five of these components.
- At breakfast, Grain, Fruit and Milk must be offered and a total of three items must be taken.
- A ½ cup serving of fruit or vegetable is required to make a reimbursable meal.
- All items sold that are not a part of a reimbursable meal are considered a la carte purchases, including single service items.

Why are a la carte items sold in schools?

A la carte items provide additional choice and variety to students and staff.

- A la carte items include a wide variety of food and beverage items including a second entrée, additional fruit or vegetable serving, bottled water, milk and a variety of snack items.
- All items sold a la carte meet the USDA Smart Snack guidelines. See more details below.



Calories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snacks : less than or equal to 200 calories • Entrées: less than or equal to 350 calories
Sodium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snack Items: less than or equal to 200 mg • Entrée Items: less than or equal to 480 mg
Total Fat	• <35% Calories from Fat
Saturated Fat	• <10% Calories from Saturated Fat
Trans Fat	• Zero grams per serving
Sugar	• <35% Sugar (by weight)

Can I put money on my child's School Café account for A la Carte purchases?

Yes. Families may put money on their child's [School Café](#) account to purchase a la carte items including second entrees, additional servings of fruit and vegetable, bottled water, beverages and snacks.

Can I limit my student's a la carte purchases?

Yes. Families have the option to limit their student's purchase of a la carte items using their [School Café](#) account or using this form. This will give a signal to the cashier that purchases are limited.