



August 2019

Dear West Chester Area School District Parents and Guardians:

Welcome to a new school year! The West Chester Area School District Food Service staff is looking forward to serving your children nutritious, great-tasting menus that support their achievements in school and promote healthy lifestyles. This year we will continue to expand our program to better serve our students and their families; and this year, as part of this expansion, we have updated the program design to better reflect the sophisticated tastes of today's students.

For your students, we offer a variety of meal choices with one goal in mind: To provide outstanding service and high quality "kid-friendly" meals that meet or exceed the latest federal and state requirements. West Chester Area School District elementary and middle school menus are designed to ensure that students receive a balanced meal, consisting of foods from all major food groups in the right proportions to meet calorie and other nutrient needs. The products and the cooking methods we use conserve food quality and nutrients, while limiting the addition of fats and eliminating frying. So although you may see popular items like pizza and chicken nuggets on your menus, be assured that your child's school meal selections contain healthy whole grains and are lower in fat and salt than what you find in grocery stores or restaurants. We will also be offering some different foods that your children may not have tried before, so please encourage your child to taste these items. They just might become a new favorite!

- At least fifty percent of the breads and grain products served for breakfast and lunch now will be whole grain-rich, ensuring plenty of fiber and other essential nutrients. Added Trans fats have been eliminated from all foods; and menus are planned to limit sodium to meet the new standards set by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for school meals.
- The **National School Lunch Program (NSLP)** will continue to have age-appropriate calorie limits; offer more servings of fruits and plenty of vegetables, with a focus on nutrient-dense dark green, red/orange and legume vegetable selections; and offer a wide variety of grain and protein items.
- The **School Breakfast Program (SBP)** will also have age-appropriate calorie limits for 2 grade groups (K-5 and 6-8). Schools must now offer even more fruit and/or vegetables every day, and students will have to take at least ½ cup of fruit with each breakfast meal.

We will continue to post signs on each service line to show students how to select a reimbursable meal, as well as to help them understand how their choices fit into the key food groups needed to ensure a balanced approach to healthy eating.

Lunch

Monthly menus from the school will be sent home through email. The West Chester Area School District Food Service Department uses the Pay Schools computerized meal accountability system. Please look for a detailed explanation of this system in a separate letter.

The lunch price for **Elementary School Students** is \$2.75 for elementary students. Lunch for students who qualify for reduced-priced lunch is \$0.00. Each meal comes with milk. Students can purchase extra milk for 70¢.

Menus for **Middle School students** will be posted in the cafeteria and also sent home through email. The lunch price for middle schools is \$3.00. We also offer a Premium lunch at the cost of \$ 3.60. These menu items are clearly marked for their price point. This higher tiered lunch is an additional option for students that want to upgrade their meal choices. Lunch for students who qualify for reduced-priced or free meals is at no cost. Each meal comes with milk.

Breakfast

Breakfast is served at all schools. Breakfast menus will also be sent home through our email system. The cost of breakfast is as follows; Elementary School Paid Status is \$1.25; Middle School Paid status is \$ 1.50 and reduced and free is at no cost to you. Breakfast is served in the cafeteria daily. **Paid, reduced and**

free status extends to breakfast as well. Reduced Breakfast and Lunch meals will continue to be free of charge.

We serve breakfast and lunch at all school locations within the school cafeteria daily. Hot and cold breakfast options are available for student to create their own breakfast. We also have a **“Morning Snack Pack”** as part of our breakfast program for kids on the go or even if they have already had breakfast at home. If your child is free or reduced status, they are entitled to this breakfast, so why not encourage them to take a morning snack pack and eat it at lunch. Our breakfast programs run between 8:00am - 9:00am, based on your child’s school schedule. The Morning Nutrition Breakfast Bag is designed to be taken with the student to be eaten during a designated snack time or with their lunch as a snack.

Student’s Nutrition and Wellness Education

Our nutrition education programs encourage students’ development of healthy lifestyle habits and education in the basics of good nutrition. You may already know that ARAMARK is an active participant in your District’s Wellness Committee, so if you have questions or comments regarding nutrition and wellness, please let me know.

Our new nutrition website will help parents, teachers and nurses find valuable information on the foods that we serve. Please go to the following web address to see what is new!

<http://westchesterpa.nutrislice.com/>

Student Wellness Promotions

Our wellness promotions include tasty, exciting recipes developed by our chefs and dietitians to introduce new, healthy menu items to the students who often eat in the same location every day. These promotions offer fun themes and appealing recipes to ensure that the students don’t get bored with their school lunch offerings. Examples of this year’s themes and special recipes include Asian cuisine, Cajun Cuisine, and an international festival.

FUEL—This program features monthly menu specials, developed by our chefs and nutritionists, to generate excitement by introducing new recipes or putting new twists on popular favorites. Designed for middle and high school students, FUEL combats menu fatigue and reinforces the connection between healthy meals and performance at school and in favorite sports and activities.

Special Event Promotions—Monthly promotional ideas and merchandising material templates, which can be customized, are also used to increase student excitement, satisfaction and meal participation. Promotional kits celebrate holidays and national events like Election Day; health-related themes, including National Nutrition Month or American Heart Month; and school-specific events, such as homecoming or spring dances.

Free and Reduced-Priced Meals

Applications for free and reduced-priced meals are available at each school and our food service website. Each school will distribute a free and reduced-priced application to parents to complete and return to their child’s respective school office. As a courtesy, all students who qualified for free or reduced-priced lunches last June will remain eligible until October 13, 2019. After that date, a new application must be completed and returned to the school office, for a student to continue to receive free or reduced-priced meals. Applications can also be found on our district food service website at www.wcasd.net under Food Services.

Families who qualify for free or reduced-priced lunches also qualify for the same category of breakfast. If the income in your household changes during the school year, please feel free to fill out another application. We will continue not charging for reduced price meals (breakfast and lunch) for the 2019-2020 school year.

Payforit.net and Point of Sale

Use of the Payforit Point of Sale system to make deposits on a student’s lunch account does include a small convenience fee to offset the banking fees associated with this transaction. This fee (\$1.25 per ACH transaction and \$1.99 per credit card transaction) will be added to the total charge upon payment. This charge is only for student lunch account deposits. Parents can avoid the fee if paying with cash or check. Please make checks payable to the West Chester Area SD Cafeteria Fund. Students can give the check or cash to their teacher in the elementary schools. Middle school students can give the cash or check directly to the cashier in their cafeteria.

Here is a summary of the basic information about our computerized Debit Point of Sale (POS) System:

- Our POS System & Software provides complete confidentiality for all students' Meal Status; Paid, Free or Reduced. (Reduced is zero charge)
- Participation in the *debit system* (*maintaining an account balance*) is optional. Daily cash sales are accepted.
- Students use their current student identification number for all transactions.
- The PIN must be used for all cafeteria POS transactions, including "Cash Sales".
- Payments into the debt system may be cash, check, money order, or Pay For It at www.payforit.net. Instructions for setting up Pay for It account(s) can be found on the Food Service page of the district website. www.wcasd.net
- Checks and Money orders should be made payable to: WCASD Cafeteria Fund.
- Checks returned by the bank will be charged-back in full to the student's account.
- Food Services reserve the right to insist upon cash or money order payments after a returned check on any student's account.
- Auto replenishment is available for all accounts. When an account is created, account holders have the option of using the auto replenishes on the site. The auto replenishment option will let you choose an end date for this process. Please make sure you chose "end of school year". Also, if you had auto replenishment for the 2018-2019 school year you will need to revisit the site to begin the auto replenishment option for the 2019-2020 school year.
- Debit accounts may be set up as Open Account (unrestricted purchases) or Meals Only. Please indicate your account choice (Open Account or Meals Only) with each payment.
- POS balances are transferred to the students' accounts throughout the district in each successive year.
- No cash refunds are issued to students at any time. Check refunds will be issued to parents, upon request.
- Allowable notes on student's accounts are limited to "Lunch Only". Any dietary restrictions MUST go through the district nurse and school food service department.

Food Allergies

Food allergies and intolerances are increasing among our nation's children. We ask you to let us know if your child has any special dietary restrictions, and we will make every effort to accommodate your individual needs.

We are proud to serve your child and encourage you to support our ongoing efforts to improve student health and well-being by participating in our Food Service program. For more information about our menus and programs, please visit our website at www.wcasd.net and to learn more about healthy school meals visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov> or www.myhealthyforlife.com. We hope that you and your child have a great year! Please feel free to call me at 484-266-3880 with any questions or comments.

Thank you!

Clare DiSabatino
Food Service Director