

Introduction to School Meals

National School Lunch Program

The National School Lunch Program is a federally funded program providing nutritionally balanced lunches to children each school day. Schools that participate in the program receive financial assistance and donated commodities for each meal they serve. In return they must serve meals that meet federal nutrition requirements and must offer free or reduced price lunches to eligible children. In addition, ala carte food items are available for purchase at the Middle Schools.

School Breakfast Program

The School Breakfast Program is a federally funded program. Financial assistance is given to schools for each breakfast served to children, which meets the USDA breakfast meal pattern requirements. Portage Public Schools participates in the School Breakfast Program in all of our secondary buildings. In addition, ala carte breakfast items are available for purchase.

Menu Planning

The Director of Dining Services plans breakfast and lunch menus based on availability of products and student preferences. Input for these menus is received from many sources including students, parents, food service staff, school staff and other school districts. All menus are planned to meet the Meal Pattern Requirements established by the USDA.



Portage Public Schools
Food Service Department
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What is my child eating at school?

Q: How can I keep my child from purchasing items for lunch that I would prefer they not have?

A: The most effective way to handle this is for you log onto www.SendMoneyToSchool.com and directly place the restrictions on your child's account. You may also e-mail, US mail or FAX your wishes to the Food Service office. We can display a message on the student's account screen that reflects those wishes. For example: "\$2.50 per day limit" or "School lunch only". Whenever your child uses their account, they will not be allowed to purchase over the dollar limit you have set.

Q: What is a School Lunch?

A: A School Lunch is the term used by the USDA to define a lunch that meets their requirements for a reimbursable meal. It includes 5 components: meat/protein, fruit, vegetable, bread/grain, and milk. Your child is offered all 5 components daily; they must choose 3 to 5 to qualify as a school lunch.

Q: What can my child select as a school lunch choice?

A: Students may select their lunch from any of our Profiles Stations. We offer balanced choice entrees, burgers, chicken sandwiches, comfort food entrees, and packaged salads. Homemade Pizza's and Sandwich Central, which features made- to-order sandwiches, subs and wraps, qualify as a Premium School Lunch.

Q: How much money should I send for my child's lunch?

A: The price for a School Lunch for the 2011-12 school year is \$2.15. A Premium School Lunch is \$2.40. Some parents feel this is all their child should spend. Students, who make choices other than the school lunch, may spend from \$2.25 – \$5.00 per day. It varies widely, so you will need to decide what is a reasonable amount of money for your child to spend each day.

Q: What if my child has special needs or diet restrictions?

A: Please contact the Director of Dining Services at 269-323-5155.

Q: What if I have questions about the school lunch program?

A: Please do not hesitate to call the Food Service office with any concerns that you may have. We will be happy to assist you in any way that we can. Your Director of Dining Services can be reached at 269-323-5155.

2011 - 2012 School Meal Prices

Secondary School Lunch \$2.15
Premium Lunch - Pizza & Sandwich Central \$2.40
Adult Lunch \$2.75
Milk \$.45

A school lunch includes your entrée, and your choice of a vegetable, fruit and half pint of milk or a 4 oz. juice.

At Portage Public Schools, we provide an offer vs. serve environment so students may select a combination of food items they prefer to complete their meal. In order to purchase a meal for \$2.15, students must choose an entrée plus 1 - 3 of the vegetables, fruits and beverages listed below.

Entrées can include: Origins station Entrée of the Day, veggie burger, hamburger, cheeseburger, chicken sandwich, sandwich central wrap or a packaged salad.

Vegetables include: vegetable of the day, or a small salad. Fruits include: fruit of the day, a piece of fresh fruit or 4 oz. juice.

Beverages include: one half pint of milk or one 4 oz. juice.

Students may choose the Premium School Lunch – Homemade Pizza or Sandwich Central with their choice of 1 - 3 vegetables, fruits and beverages listed above for only \$2.40.

The Point of Sale System (POS)

As a middle school student, you will be using an electronic card reading system to make your purchases in the cafeteria. This system requires the use of a personal identification number (PIN) or photo ID cards when making a purchase. It is a simple system once you adapt to it. Below is important information for using the POS system.

Cards & PIN's – The new photo I.D. cards are expected within the first few weeks of school. If you have an I.D. card from last year, you can use it until your new card arrives. Your I.D. card will have a bar code on it that can be read by the computer to identify who you are. **DO NOT** tamper with your card. **DO NOT** loan your card to anyone else. This is your card and can only be used by you to access your account. PIN numbers are the same as your student ID number. To prevent someone from using up the money in your account please report lost ID cards to the Food Service Dept. and make sure not to give your PIN to anyone else.

Payment – Pre-payments are accepted by credit card, check, money order, or cash and can be for any denomination. Credit card payments can be made online through www.SendMoneyToSchool.com. Note: There is a \$1 convenience fee to utilize this method of replenishment. Checks or Money Orders should be made out to Portage Public Schools. **Please make sure to include your child's student ID number on all forms of payment.**

Checks – When you pay with a check, you will not be allowed to receive cash back. Checks will be deposited to your child's account for the full amount for which they are written. **Counter/starter checks and checks drawn off of a business account cannot be accepted for student meals.**

Withdrawals – Your account is not a bank account. Money on your lunch account is for food purchases only. We do not allow students to withdraw funds from their account at any time. The only exception is if a student moves and the parents provide a written request to withdraw

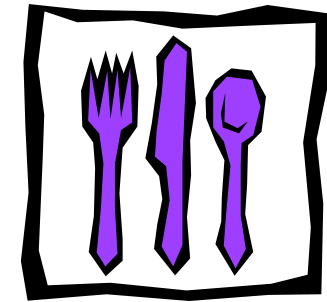
their money. A check will be prepared by the District and mailed to the address on file with your school within 30 business days.

Negative Balances – You must have money in your account to use your I.D. card or PIN, unless you receive free meal benefits. Students who forget their money or do not have money left in their account may charge up to two school lunches per school year (\$4.80). You will not be allowed to purchase snacks or ala carte items if you have a negative balance. No charging will be permitted during the last two weeks of school. All negative balances must be paid by the end of the school year in order to avoid collection action.

How to Use the System – When you get to the front of the line, it is important that you **HAVE YOUR PIN number memorized or your I.D. CARD OUT AND READY TO USE.** The cashier will indicate that you may place your card under the card reader or enter your PIN. The cashier will then complete your transaction. You may ask for account and balance information any time. I.D. cards / PIN's are required to use your Food Service account. **Verbal I.D. numbers are not accepted by the cashiers.**

Meal Benefits – If you have been approved for free or reduced price meals, your status is in the computer. Meal Benefits are applied on the date the application is processed in the computer. **Please note that until your meal benefit application is processed, you are financially responsible for any meals consumed by your child.** The Meal Benefit program is a completely confidential program. Your child's classmates will not know if your family is a recipient of this benefit. If you have not gotten a letter in the mail regarding your eligibility status, you should contact the food service office.

The Middle School Food Service Program



at
Portage Public
Schools

In Partnership with:

