

FOOD FOR THOUGHT Fall 2023

School Nutrition Program Newsletter - Hardin County Schools

Welcome to the 2023-2024 School Year!

The School Nutrition Program welcomes you to a new school year. This newsletter will provide you with information about cafeteria operations at all the Hardin County Schools. We hope that you will take a few minutes to read this edition and learn about your school cafeteria's breakfast and lunch programs.

A variety of foods are offered daily, including seasonal fresh fruits and/or vegetables. Menus are posted on the web page www.hardincoschools.com and elementary menus are published each week in The Courier newspaper. Our goal is to feed all the children in the district a nutritious breakfast and lunch every day. You can rest assured that our team strives to do just that at every meal.

Community Eligibility Provision

This year will be the tenth year that Hardin County has qualified for the Community Eligibility Provision. Again, this school year, breakfast and lunch will be provided at **NO COST** for ALL students in Hardin County Schools. Specific USDA guidelines apply to this program.

Household Survey

We need your help as we work to reapply for Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for future years. You will be receiving a Household Survey at the beginning of school this year. The information you provide about who lives in your household is helpful to us as we work to try to continue to qualify for the CEP program for the following school year. Please fill out the survey and return it with your student to school.

Barcodes

Each student and adult have an individualized 4-digit barcode that they use daily to access their computerized school café account. This number is assigned when they enter Hardin County Schools and will remain with them during their entire time while enrolled in our school system. Students are encouraged to memorize their barcode since they will be entering it on a keypad in the cafeteria for each meal. Money may be deposited into student's computerized school café account to use for purchases of extra and a la' carte items. This barcode is also used for computers and to access other programs within the school system.

What's in a Meal?

Students are given choices of the foods they want to eat through a program called "Offer-vs-Serve." All grades and meals, except for Pre-K breakfast, will be offer-vs-serve, unless the meal is transported. Even if students bring a sandwich or lunch from home, they might want to get a meal at school consisting of fruit and vegetable accompaniments and milk to drink. Here is how the program works and the choices available.

Breakfast: There are three components that make up a "School Breakfast":

- Grain or Meat to count as Grain or Grain/Meat combination
- Fruit and/or Fruit Juice (up to 1 cup total)
- Milk – 1 cup

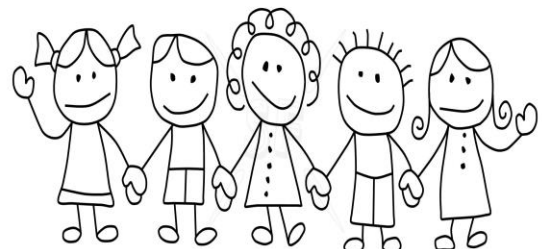
For a student's choices to count as a breakfast, the student must choose a minimum of three items from at least two different components. One of the items selected **MUST** be a minimum of ½ cup fruit or fruit juice. There is a maximum of five food items that a student may choose for breakfast. Some grain or grain/meat combinations may be a single item but will count as 2 items, i.e.: breakfast pizza, sausage and biscuit, etc.

Lunch: There are five components that make up a "School Lunch":

- One Entrée – Meat/Meat Alternate
- A Serving of Grain
- A Serving of Vegetables (up to 1 cup total)
- A Serving of Fruit (PK-8 may select ½ cup) (Grades 9-12 may select up to 1 cup fruit)
- Milk – 1 cup

For a student's lunch tray to count as a "School Lunch," they must select an item from at least three different food components, or they may choose all five. One of the items selected **MUST** be at least ½ cup serving of fruit or vegetable.

Wholesome meals are prepared daily in each of our school cafeterias. All HCS cafeterias offer multiple entrees daily, so students have choices. We look forward to the opportunity to feed your children this school year.



A la' Carte Purchases

Students may also purchase extra entrees or other a la' carte items in addition to the meal they receive. Students are not allowed to charge items. They must have money in hand or in their school café account to purchase these extra items. Some Smart Snack approved items available in all schools are:

Extra Entrees (Pizza, Burger, etc.)	\$2.25
Extra Fruit or Veggie	1.00
Extra Milk	.50
Ice Cream	1.00
100% Fruit Juice – 6.75 oz.	.75
Rice Krispies Treat or Cookies	.75
Fruit Roll-ups or Fruit Gummies	.75
Mini Rice Krispie Treat	.25

Hardin County High School and Hardin County Middle School also offer additional Smart Snack approved chips and snacks for sale a la' carte in the cafeteria.

Meal Pricing for Adults and Visitors

Adult HCS Employee Meal - Breakfast \$2.50

Adult HCS Employee Meal - Lunch \$3.50

Visitor Meal - Breakfast \$3.00, Lunch \$4.50

Holiday Visitor Meal - \$6.00*

*Thanksgiving, Christmas and Easter

Students Transferring Schools

If your child is moving from one school to another school within Hardin County, the money from their computerized school café account will roll to their new school. If there is any money left in the child's account at the end of the year, it will be available to him/her at the start of the new school year even if they change schools.



Why is Breakfast so Important?

Breakfast gives your child the "fuel" that is important for their physical needs so they can be as successful as possible each day at school. Studies have shown students that eating breakfast increases learning and concentration. All seven of our school cafeterias offer a full breakfast each morning. Some of the items offered are whole grain cereal, yogurt, biscuits, eggs, sausage, mini waffles, breakfast pizza, 100% fruit juice, fresh fruits, and milk. Check out the time that your school starts breakfast and give it a try.

Supply Chain

Please note, just as in retail, we are still experiencing supply chain issues. We apologize in advance for some last-minute menu changes that could occur due to product availability issues.

Help Wanted

Hardin County School Cafeterias are always in need of dependable and dedicated substitutes and employees for the school cafeterias. These opportunities are perfect for parents with children because you can work the same hours and days as your children. Fill out an application at the Hardin County Board of Education, 155 Guinn Street, Savannah, TN, or call Cheryl Cochran or Kristen Tomlinson at 925-3943 for more information. You may also talk to the manager at your child's school.

Contacting Your School Cafeteria...

If you ever have a question about your cafeteria, you can call the manager of that school's dining facility and talk directly to her. Here is a "Who's Who" for the School Nutrition Program of Hardin County Schools.

<u>School</u>	<u>Manager</u>	<u>Phone #</u>
East Hardin	Jackie Smith	926-4622
Northside	Sharon Doran	926-4522
Parris South	Angela Smith	925-2230
West Hardin	Alyssa Reynolds	632-3242
Hardin County Middle	Shanna Davis	925-4247
Southside School	Shanna McAfee	689-5315
Hardin County High	Donna Wallace	925-2238
School Nutrition Office	Cheryl Cochran Monica Garton	925-3943

Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program

East Hardin, Northside, Parris South and West Hardin Elementary Schools were once again awarded a grant for 2023 – 2024 for the USDA Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program. All students in these schools will be offered a fresh fruit or vegetable snack daily at no cost.

Wellness Policy

Hardin County's Wellness Policy and most recent assessment are posted on the Hardin County School's website at www.hardincoschools.com Please contact Cheryl Cochran at 731.925.3943 if you are interested in participating in the assessment, review, and update of our local school wellness policy.

Quality Products Make Quality Meals!

Hardin County School Nutrition Program uses food products from many of the same quality manufacturers that you use in your home kitchens. Listed here are just a few examples of the quality products we use. Purity Milk, Tyson, J. M. Smuckers, Pillsbury, Kellogg's, Kraft, Ore-Ida, Heinz, General Mills, Dole, and Frito Lay.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.