



Frequently Asked Questions

1. How are the menus planned?

Menus are planned at the district level by an Assistant Director and a Registered Dietetic Technician. The menus must meet certain guidelines as set forth by the U.S. government as part of the National School Lunch Program and National School Breakfast Program. All three elementary schools have the same menu, PHMS has its own menu, and PHHS has its own unique menu. Various choices are available daily at each school.

2. What qualifies as a reimbursable (Free, Reduced or Paid) meal?

SMCSC meals must meet certain meal patterns to qualify as reimbursable meals through the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs. A basic meal consists of the following:

<u>BREAKFAST</u>	<u>LUNCH</u>
1 breakfast entrée	1 serving meat/meat alternate
1-2 servings fruit	1-2 servings fruit and 1-2 servings vegetables
1 milk	1 serving bread/grain
	1 milk

Students have the option of declining components of their meal. For lunch, a student may decline one or two components. For breakfast, students may decline one component. Students must meet the minimum number of components in order to receive the reimbursable meal price.

3. How do I know which items are part of a reimbursable meal and which items are sold ala carte?

At the elementary level, there are no ala carte sales. Every item offered is part of the reimbursable meal. The only ala carte charges are the purchase of extra items (i.e. milk, extra entrée, extra bread). At PHMS and PHHS, there are many items that are sold as ala carte that do not count as part of the reimbursable meal. Examples of items that are always ala carte include drinks, whole grain cookies, baked chips/pretzels and more.

4. How much does a reimbursable meal cost?

Meal prices are as follows:

	<u>Grades K-8</u>		<u>Grades 9-12</u>	
	Reduced	Paid	Reduced	Paid
Breakfast	\$.30	\$2.00	\$.30	\$2.25
Lunch	\$.40	\$3.05	\$.40	\$3.15

5. I receive free or reduced-price lunch and breakfast. What exactly can I purchase at this price?

The free or reduced-price is for a reimbursable meal. You must meet the requirements of this meal to receive the meal at a free or reduced price. You can purchase ala carte outside of this, but it will not be included in a free or reduced-price meal. Multiple entrée choices are offered at each school. You may purchase ANY entrée as part of your free or reduced-price meal. At PHHS, you may build a reimbursable meal that will qualify at any line.

6. Will the other students know if I receive free or reduced-price meals?

No! You will purchase meals just as any other student.

7. How are portion sizes determined?

The USDA regulates the portion sizes of foods that are considered part of the reimbursable meal. The meal pattern specifies the minimum number of servings and portion sizes for each of the required components. Serving sizes are adjusted to meet the nutritional needs of students according to age. Meal prices are calculated based on the recommended serving sizes. When serving larger portions, food costs would increase and result in higher prices.

8. How nutritious are school meals?

Both lunch and breakfast must meet certain nutrition requirements as required by the government. Meal patterns must meet 1/3 of the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) of key nutrients for lunch and 1/4 of the RDA for breakfast. There are required nutrient standards for Calories, five key nutrients (protein, calcium, iron, vitamin A, and vitamin C), Total Fat, and Saturated Fat.

9. I receive free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch. If I pack my lunch from home, can I get a free milk?

No, not by itself. By completing a meal application, you are eligible to receive a free or reduced-price MEAL. The regulations are written to ensure that each meal served meets requirements of a healthy, balanced meal. Certain components of the meal cannot be singled out, an entire meal must be purchased. A student may get a fruit, vegetable and a milk at the reduced or free price to enjoy with food brought from home.

10. How do I pay for meals?

There are three options to pay for meals: cash, check, and online payment with debit or credit card at www.EZSchoolPay.com. Our schools DO NOT accept payment during lunch—all payment must be paid into student's account prior to breakfast and lunch. At the elementary level, money should be sent in an envelope and is collected daily. PHMS and PHHS have prepayment kiosks in which money can be deposited each morning. This is an effort to serve students as quickly and efficiently as possible. Each student has an account in our computer software program that will follow the student from grades K-12.

11. What are the advantages of using EZSchoolPay.com?

There are many! It is easy to use, safe, and allows parents to track what their students are purchasing. Also, it is FREE for parents to use! SMCS greatly encourages the use of EZSchoolPay.com because it is a very efficient and safe way of collecting money for student accounts. In addition, the speed of the serving lines GREATLY INCREASES when money is paid in advance. Student ID numbers for use on EZSchoolPay.com can be found on your PowerSchool parent portal page, by contacting your child's school office, or by contacting the Nutrition Services Department.

12. How are accounts accessed at the point of sale?

At the elementary level, students enter by Homeroom in alphabetical order. Students only need to say their name to the cashier. At the secondary level, we use a biometric (finger scan) identification system for the added security this system provides.

13. Why is an adult/ visitor meal a higher price than student meals? Isn't the amount of food served in each is the same?

The Nutrition Services Department receives varying amounts of reimbursement for each student meal we serve. We receive NO reimbursement for adult/visitor meals. As a result, adult/visitor is charged a la carte pricing which reflects the actual cost of the meal.

14. Who do I contact if I have additional questions about my child's meals?

You can contact your child's cafeteria or Amanda Worrick, Director of Nutrition Services at 765-778-2152 ext. 1015.