



## POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT MENU INFORMATION Frequently Asked Questions



**Q1: Who develops the menu?**

**A1:** Menus are developed by a team of food and nutrition professionals, which includes two registered dietitians. The final menu must be reviewed by the menu planning committee and approved by the Director of Food and Nutrition.

**Q2: What is the menu planning process?**

**A2:** Popular menu items are selected for the menu based on student preferences and survey results. Factors such as quality, nutrition, cost, and production/serving logistics are also considered. Staff members and students test new menu items in-house. We analyze all menus with computer software to ensure the nutrients are consistent with government requirements. In addition, key supervisory personnel who work directly with student preferences at all levels provide valuable input to the process.

**Q3: Why should my child buy lunch at school rather than bring it from home?**

**A3:** The school lunch assures that your child is receiving a nutritionally balanced meal, which saves you valuable time, money, and energy in preparing packed lunches. In addition, school meals are safe, nutritious, healthy, low cost, and meet federal and state requirements for nutrients and variety. Students also develop social skills and learn good nutrition habits that provide a basis for better health throughout their lives.

**Q4: Are school lunches high in fat, sodium, and calories?**

**A4: No.** Registered dietitians plan lunch meals according to USDA guidelines to provide one-third of the students' recommended dietary allowances. Our lunches contain no more than 30 percent calories from fat and 10 percent calories from saturated fat, averaged over a week. A computer program analyzes all menus. We specify food items such as chicken nuggets, pizza, and hamburgers to contain limited amounts of fat and sodium. The nutrient content is different than those sold in local fast food restaurants because these products are specially made for school nutrition programs. In addition, special attention is paid to limit sodium and trans fatty acids.

**Q5: Who determines the portion sizes of school meals?**

**A5:** The United States Department of Agriculture. Portion sizes and nutrient standards are designed to give children one-third of their recommended dietary allowances (RDA) at lunch and one-fourth of their RDA for breakfast.

**Q6: How many calories are in the average school lunch?**

**A6:** Preschool lunches contain 517 calories, elementary lunches contain 645 calories, and secondary lunches contain 819 calories (averaged over a one week period).

**Q7: How many calories are in the average school breakfast?**

**A7:** Preschool breakfasts contain 388 calories, elementary breakfasts contain 487 calories, and secondary breakfasts contain 615 calories (averaged over a one week period).

**Q8: What options are available for religious beliefs?**

**A8:** Because students have five entrée choices each day in elementary schools and eight or more choices in secondary schools, this is usually not a problem. The menu identifies pork entrees.



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MENU INFORMATION**  
Frequently Asked Questions (Continued)



**Q9: What if my child has a dietary restriction or food allergies?**

**A9:** Have your child's physician complete a [Medical Statement](#) signed by a licensed physician, physician's assistant, or registered nurse. Simply submit this medical statement (that includes the recommended substitute foods) to the school health attendant who will forward it to the food and nutrition supervisor.

**Q10: Are vegetarian meals available?**

**A10: Yes.** Yogurt, bean and cheese burritos, and meatless salads are available every day. Our menu also contains meatless entrée choices, such as cheese pizza, toasted cheese sandwich, and macaroni and cheese. There are also a wide variety of fruits and vegetables available each day.

**Q11: What if my child is lactose intolerant or has milk sensitivity?**

**A11:** We can provide a substitute beverage when supported by a [Medical Statement](#) signed by licensed physician, physician's assistant, or registered nurse. It is not necessary to submit a new statement each year.

**Q12: Can my children substitute juice for the milk that comes with their school meals?**

**A12: No.** Federal and state regulations require milk as a component of the school meals pattern. Milk contributes important nutrients such as protein, calcium, riboflavin, Vitamin A, and Vitamin D. No other food or beverage can match the essential nutrients contained in milk. For students who cannot drink milk due to milk allergies or other medical conditions, a medical statement from an authorized medical authority is required with a list of approved substitutes such as 100 percent fruit juice.

**Q13: Can a teacher or school official restrict what a child selects from the lunch line?**

**A13: No.** What a child selects is a decision made by the child and his or her parents.

**Q14: Can school meals be withheld or restricted as a discipline method?**

**A14: No.** The National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 prohibits school officials from denying a meal or milk to any eligible child as a disciplinary measure.

**Q15: Where does the food you serve come from?**

**A15:** We solicit sealed competitive bids from vendors to provide food according to federal, state, and local laws and guidelines. All food items are wholesome and purchased from approved suppliers based upon product specifications. We purchase food from the same quality suppliers and manufacturers that top quality restaurants use. Many of the foods served are also the same food you see every day at the local grocery store.

**Q16: Will I be able to pay less for my meal if I do not take all the options, i.e., milk?**

**A16: No.** Federal and state regulations require Districts to price meals as a complete unit. As a result, the price of a reimbursable meal does not change if a student does not take a menu item or requests smaller portions. Also, meals that contain less than the required food items may not qualify for reimbursement. If this happens, the student may be charged a higher price than if the student had chosen to take all items offered on the menu. (7 CFR 210.10, 42 USC CHAPTER 13, and Agreement with CDE)