

# Food Program Manual



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**NORTH COUNTY  
CHARTER SCHOOL**

**Food and Nutrition Services**

**2024-2025 SY**

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# An Overview

## Statement

NCCS is committed to providing the opportunity for every child to eat well-balanced and nutritious meals daily. In advocating student achievement, our aspiration is to develop lifelong eating habits that promote health and wellness through proper nutrition.

By combining culinary and nutrition talents, our goals are to:

- Prevent hunger by providing attractive nourishing meals in a welcoming atmosphere
- Contribute to student success
- Offer nutrition education to students, employees and the community
- Maintain a safe and clean environment
- Attract, hire, support and retain a high-quality workforce
- Communicate and engage with students to build awareness and trust

# Program Information

NCCS offers healthy breakfast and lunch meals each school day. All meals served meet the nutritional standards set by the United States Department of Agriculture. All meals which are prepared in our kitchen are either baked, steamed, boiled, grilled or warmed up to temperature following food safety standards. In order to reinforce healthy eating, we generally refrain from frying any food. All foods offered meet dietary restrictions and federal service requirements.

## Meal Costs

North County Charter School offers a choice of healthy meals each school day. All meals served meet the nutrition standards set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The following are the meal prices set for the 2024-25 school year. **\*\*Note:** Pay rates will match or be less than the School District of Indian River.

Grade Level	Meal Offered	Cost
All (VPK to 5 <sup>th</sup> )	Breakfast – Full Pay	\$1.50
	Lunch – Full Pay	\$2.50
	Breakfast – Reduced Priced	\$0.30
	Lunch – Reduced Priced	\$0.40
Adults	Breakfast – Full Pay	\$2.50
	Lunch – Full Pay	\$4.50

## Reimbursable Meals

### Offer vs. Serve

OVS applies to menu planning and meal service and allows students to decline some of the food offered in a reimbursable meal. When students and cafeteria staff understand OVS, the serving lines move smoothly, allowing students to make the most of mealtime and enjoy the wholesome and appealing foods they are served. It also helps reduce overall food costs.

At the point of service, employees are trained and informed on what constitutes a reimbursable meal.

## Breakfast

Under OVS at breakfast, schools must offer at least four food items from the three required food components (fruit, grains, and fluid milk). In order for a meal to be considered complete, or reimbursable, students MUST select three items from the four offered components, one of which MUST be a fruit or vegetable.

## Lunch

Under OVS at lunch, schools must offer all five food components (meats/meat alternates, grains, fruits, vegetables, and fluid milk) in at least the minimum required quantities. In order for a meal to be considered complete, or reimbursable, students MUST select three items from the five offered components, one of which MUST be a fruit or vegetable. Milk is also considered an “item” and may or may not be selected.

\*Water does not count as one of the three required food components and cannot be served as a substitute for milk.

## Allergies

A food allergy is a condition in which the immune system reacts abnormally to a component of a food. Symptoms can range from mild reactions, such as hives or stomach cramps, to life-threatening anaphylaxis, characterized by difficulty breathing and fainting from low blood pressure. It's important to note that ninety percent of food allergies are caused by just eight foods: milk, egg, peanut, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish and shellfish.

The school has implemented the following:

- Identify children with food allergies and have the allergen flagged/blocked.
- Provide general training on food allergies for all staff and provide in-depth training for staff who have frequent contact with children with food allergies.
- Develop food-handling policies and procedures to prevent food allergens from unintentionally contacting another food. All employees must wear gloves when handling food; no bare hand contact.
- Sanitize and disinfect all tables/equipment/serving utensils between tasks to prevent cross-contamination.

**IMPORTANT! If your child has ANY type of food or beverage allergy, please notify the School Nurse at (772) 794-1941 and provide necessary medical documentation of the condition.**

## Menu Modifications

If a child has an allergy or disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act and that disability prevents your child from eating the regular school meal, the school will make any substitution prescribed by a medical professional at no extra charge. The school is not required to make a substitution for a food allergy unless the allergy meets the definition of a disability. If you believe your child needs substitutions, please contact the Food Service Manager (Business Manager) or any member of the Cafeteria Staff.

## Online Meal Payments

**NCCS will offer an online Meal Payment Program to start the year through “Lunchtime.” Parents can make pre-payments for meals. The link to visit is: [www.schoolpaymentportal.com](http://www.schoolpaymentportal.com)** There, each family can set up an account by following the instructions and pay via HCA, credit or debit. Parents will need their child’s school ID number (from FOCUS) to set up to put funds on account.

## Account Funds and Charge Limits

NCCS will eventually move to an online program called **SchoolCafe**. Instructions for use will be provided to parents by separate communications from this booklet when that happens. **In the event that a student's balance drops below zero, students are allowed to charge meals up to \$10.00.** Once this limit is reached, the student will be served an alternative meal until the amount owed is paid. Additionally, courtesy reminders will go out to parents whose children's accounts have outstanding balances.

## Return Check Notice

All account payments should be made via debit or credit card. Please ask the school if you desire an alternative method of payment. Returned checks due to insufficient funds will result in the school not accepting additional personal checks without the approval of the Director-Principal.

## Grace Period

For 2024/25, ALL students will receive FREE meals during the first two weeks of school. Full pay and/or reduced rates will be charged beginning the second week of school. Those parents returning forms for free/reduced consideration will have determinations made by the second week of school.

## Applications for Free or Reduced Priced Meals

The National School Lunch & Breakfast Program is subsidized for low-income families. Children who qualify under the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines may get meals free or for the reduced prices detailed previously.

## How to Apply for Free or Reduced Priced Meals

The school will provide forms during orientation. We ask that these forms be returned by Friday, August 16<sup>th</sup> for Free or Reduced price consideration. Thereafter, should any family financial circumstance change, a new form may be submitted at any time for consideration.

If you have any questions about the application, please call the school at (772) 794-1941.

## **Who Can Receive Free or Reduced Priced Meals?**

If you now receive WIC, SNAP or TANF for your child, if you are unemployed, or if are applying for a foster child, your child(ren) may be eligible for free meals. Also, if your household income is within the limits on the Federal Income Guidelines, your child(ren) can may qualify for free or reduced price meals.

## **Do I Need an Application each year?**

Yes, you must submit a new application each school year if interested in being considered for Free or Reduced meal pricing.

## **What Happens While I'm Waiting for My Application to be Processed?**

Until our office receives and approves your meal application, you must pay full price for meals for your children as of Monday, August 19th. You will need to pack lunches for your children or pay for meals at school at full rate as of this date.

## **How Long Will It take to Process My Application?**

Every effort will be made to process free or reduced applications on the day they are received. Incomplete applications may take longer to process and will be returned for additional information. The school has up to 10 operational days to approve applications.

## **Verification**

Once a year, all applications that have been submitted are subject to verification. If your application has been randomly selected for verification, you will be sent a notice indicating such. You will be asked to submit pay stubs as well as other documentation to verify the data entered on the application. Once the information has been verified and is deemed accurate, you will receive a notice stating your child's meal benefits will remain unchanged.

Should a discrepancy be identified during the verification process, information submitted will be used to resubmit the application. Meal benefits may be reduced or denied upon completion of the verification. A notification will be sent to you indicating the new status of your child's meal benefits if there are any changes required as a result of this process.

## **Refunds**

Should a child withdraw or graduate from a school in the district, a parent may request a refund of any funds remaining on the student's account. Please request a refund through the Main Office, and your request will be forwarded to the Business and Finance Manager for approval and processing.

## Wellness Policy

As required by law, the NCCS School Board established a wellness policy for the school. It is found on the school's website at: [www.nccharter.org](http://www.nccharter.org) The Wellness Policy is coded as: 3200 (Model Wellness Policy).

The Board recognizes that good nutrition and regular physical activity affect the health and well-being of our students. Furthermore, research suggests that there is a positive correlation between a student's health and well-being and his/her ability to learn. Moreover, schools can play an important role in the developmental process by which students establish their health and nutrition habits by providing nutritious meals and snacks through the schools' meal programs, by supporting the development of good eating habits, and by promoting increased physical activity both in and out of school.

The Board, however, believes this effort to support the students' development of healthy behaviors and habits with regard to eating and exercise cannot be accomplished by the school alone. It will be necessary for not only the staff, but also parents and the public at large to be involved in efforts to promote, support, and model such healthy behaviors and habits.

### School-Based Activities/Actions:

1. The school shall schedule mealtimes so there is minimum disruption by bus schedules, recess, and other special programs or events.
2. The school shall provide an attractive, clean environment in which the students eat.
3. The school will utilize an electronic payment system, therefore, eliminating any stigma or identification of students eligible to receive free and/or reduced meals.
4. A wellness committee shall exist to research and implement best practices for student and staff wellness at the school.
5. Provide positive nutritional messaging displays in the Cafeteria.
6. Offer a 30 minute daily recess as approved in the charter contract with SDIRC.
7. Encourage students to increase their consumption of healthful foods during the school day.
8. Create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits, including offering the following healthy foods that comply with the USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards:
9. Provide a variety of fresh produce to include those prepared without added fats, sugars, refined sugars, and sodium.
10. Provide a variety of vegetables daily to include specific subgroups as defined by dark green, red/orange, legumes, and starchy.
11. Provide whole grain products – half of all grains need to be whole grain-rich upon initial implementation and all grains must be whole grain-rich.
12. Provide fluid milk that is fat-free (unflavored and flavored) and low-fat (unflavored).
13. Provide meals designed to meet specific calorie ranges for age/grade groups.
14. Eliminate trans-fat from school meals.



15. Require students to select a fruit or vegetable as part of a complete reimbursable meal.
16. Designate wellness champions that will promote resources for wellness for students, families and school staff.
17. Provide opportunities for students to develop the knowledge and skills for consuming healthful foods.

The School's nutrition staff will promote and encourage Farm to School efforts in order to provide the healthy foods identified above.

All foods and beverages sold to students as fund-raisers outside of the school meals program during the regular and extended school day for consumption on the school campus shall meet the USDA Competitive Food regulations, the Alliance for A Healthier Generation's Competitive Foods and Beverages Guidelines, and the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards.

Rewarding children in the classroom should not involve candy and other foods that can undermine children's diets and health and reinforce unhealthy eating habits. A wide variety of alternative rewards can be used to provide positive reinforcement for children's behavior and academic performance.

#### Current Promotions/Partnerships

1. Through partnership with Girls On The Run and SDIRC's Annual 4/5 Track Meet, our school has the opportunity to start and implement running programs.

Furthermore, with the objectives of enhancing student health and well-being, and reducing childhood obesity, the following guidelines are established:

In accordance with Policy 3200, entitled Food Service, the food service program shall comply with Federal and State regulations pertaining to the selection, preparation, consumption, and disposal of food and beverages as well as to the fiscal management of the program.

The sale of foods of minimal nutritional value in the food service area during the lunch period is prohibited.

As set forth in policy, entitled Free and Reduced Price Meals, the guidelines for reimbursable school meals are not less restrictive than the guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

All foods offered on the school campus during the school day shall comply with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans, including competitive foods that are available to students a la carte in the dining area, as classroom snacks, or from vending machines, for classroom parties, or at holiday celebrations. \*\*Note: There are no vending machines available for student use on campus.

All food and beverages that are provided, other than through sale, on the school campus during the school day (which may include for classroom parties and at holiday celebrations) shall comply with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The food service program will strive to be financially self-supporting; however, if it is necessary to subsidize the operation, it will not be through the sale of foods with minimal nutritious value.

The food service program will provide all students affordable access to the varied and nutritious foods they need to be healthy and to learn well.

All food items and beverages available for sale to students for consumption on campus between midnight and sixty (60) minutes after the close of the regular school day shall comply with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans, including, but not limited to, competitive foods that are available to students a la carte in the dining area, as well as food items and beverages from vending machines, from school stores, or as fund-raisers by student clubs and organizations, parent groups, or boosters clubs.

The school food service program may involve students, parents, staff, and/or school officials in the selection of competitive food items to be sold in the schools.

The school shall prepare and distribute to staff, parents, and after-school program personnel snack items that comply with the current USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The food service program shall be administered by a director who is properly qualified, certificated, licensed, or credentialed, according to current professional standards.

All food service personnel shall receive pre-service training in food service operations.

Continuing professional development shall be provided for all staff of the food service program. The Superintendent has the operational responsibility for measuring and evaluating the District's implementation and progress under this policy.

The Director-Principal shall assign members of an ad hoc committee to review this policy annually and recommend changes to the Board. The committee shall include representatives of the administration, the food and nutritional services department, parents, teachers and mental health staff. In its review, the committee shall consider evidence-based strategies in determining its recommendations.

After measuring and evaluating the progress toward achieving the goals set forth herein and reviewing the changes from the committee, the Director-Principal shall submit to the board on an annual basis a summary of the evaluation and any recommended changes to this policy.

## USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online, at <https://www.ascr.usda.gov/sites/default/files/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

**mail:**

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington,  
D.C. 20250-9410; or

**fax:**

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

**email:**

[Program.Intake@usda.gov](mailto:Program.Intake@usda.gov)

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