



Walnut Valley Unified School District

Nutrition Services Department

880 South Lemon Avenue, Walnut, CA 91789 (909) 595-1261 ext. 31322

www.walnutnutrition.org

"KIDS FIRST – Every Student, Every Day, Every Meal"



1. Why are the meals free?

- a. In School Year (SY) 2022–23, Education Code (EC) 49501.5, California became the first state to implement a statewide Universal Meals Program for all school children. California's Universal Meals Program is designed to build on the foundations of the federal National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP).

2. Will breakfast/brunch and lunch still be free? If so, how much longer will that continue?

- a. Breakfast/brunch and lunch will continue to be free in California until further notice. Currently, there is no "end date." We continue to monitor the federal and state regulations.

3. Why do I need to apply if the meals are free?

- a. An application is not required to receive free meals. All students are offered a free breakfast/brunch and lunch every school day regardless of eligibility status.
- b. However, you may apply if you need an approval letter.
- c. Programs such as discounted utility bills, testing fees, college applications, P-EBT, etc. require proof of eligibility such as an approval letter.
- d. Approval letters are issued if your application is approved based on the income eligibility guidelines.
- e. The guidelines can be found on our website, www.walnutnutrition.org. Click on Meal Applications and then click "Do I Qualify"?

4. Do parents have to apply for free and reduced meals every year?

- a. No.
- b. Yes, if you need proof of eligibility for other programs.
- c. The current year's meal application is valid for one year.
- d. The current year's meal application expires at the end of the fiscal year.
 - i. The fiscal year starts July 1 and ends June 30.

5. If I know that I don't qualify for free or reduced meals, do I still need to apply?

- a. No, you are not required to apply.

6. What can I use the free/reduced eligibility letter for?

- a. Programs such as discounted utility bills, testing fees, college applications, P-EBT, etc. require proof of eligibility such as an approval letter.
- b. Approval letters are issued if your application is approved based on the income eligibility guidelines.
- c. The guidelines can be found on our website, www.walnutnutrition.org. Click on Meal Applications and then click "Do I Qualify"?

7. If my child transferred from another district and they were approved free/reduced, do I need to apply again?

- a. No, if they were approved in the current fiscal year. We will contact the Director at the previous district for validation.

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- b. Yes, if the approval was from a previous fiscal year and the eligibility expired.
- 8. Does this mean that everything is free?**
- a. All enrolled students are offered one free breakfast/brunch and one free lunch every school day.
 - b. For the district to receive funding to provide these meals, your child must take a complete meal that requires a fruit and/or vegetable component.
 - c. If your child does not take the required items, the items will be considered "a la carte" items and will require payment.
 - d. A second breakfast/brunch and a second lunch are considered "a la carte" and will require payment.
 - e. Additional "a la carte" snacks and beverages are sold at middle and high schools.
- 9. Why do I have to pay for a second meal?**
- a. Second meals are considered "a la carte".
 - b. The federal and state regulations do not fund the district for "a la carte" items sold.
 - c. The federal and state regulations only fund one breakfast/brunch and one lunch every school day for enrolled students.
- 10. What are the prices for a second breakfast/brunch and lunch?**
- a. Second Breakfast/Brunch - \$2.50
 - b. Second Lunch - \$3.50
 - c. Prices are subject to change.
 - d. Updated prices can be found on our website, www.walnutnutrition.org.
 - e. The second meal must meet USDA meal pattern requirements.
- 11. My child brings lunch from home. Can they get milk or juice for free?**
- a. No, only a complete meal that includes all the required components is free per our federal and state guidelines. They can purchase milk or any other "a la carte" item.
- 12. How can I put money into my child's account? Do you accept checks, credit cards, etc.?**
- a. Cash or Check Payments (checks payable to: WVUSD Nutrition Services):
 - i. The Nutrition Services cashier at the school site can add the money to their account.
 - ii. Payments are also accepted in the Nutrition Services Office – 880 S. Lemon Ave. Walnut
 - b. Credit Card Payments:
 - i. Visit our website, www.walnutnutrition.org. Click on Family Portal. Create an account and follow the instructions. Must have student name and ID#.
- 13. How do I see how much money is left in my child's account?**
- a. Visit our website, www.walnutnutrition.org. Click Family Portal. Create a free account to view student balances, transaction history, etc.
 - b. Credit card payments for meal accounts can also be processed through Family Portal.
- 14. My child still has money in their account. Can I get a refund or transfer the funds to a sibling?**

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- a. Please visit our website, www.walnutnutrition.org, and click on REFUND. Complete the form and email it to nutrition@wvusd.org. Refunds can take up to 10 days to process. Please cancel any recurring pre-payments through the Family Portal also found on our website.
 - b. If your child attends a middle or high school, they can use their funds to purchase “a la carte” second meals, snacks, and beverages. Elementary sites also offer second/third meals for purchase.
- 15. My child was charged for something that he/she did not purchase. How can I get that charge reversed?**
- a. Please email nutrition@wvusd.org or call (909) 595-1261 ext. 31322 and provide details for consideration.
 - b. An alert “VERIFY PHOTO” will be placed in our point-of-sale system.
 - c. This alert pops up to alert our cashier whenever your child’s ID# is entered.
- 16. Are the meals healthy?**
- a. There are many definitions of “healthy.”
 - b. By law, USDA is required to set standards for the foods and beverages served through the school meal programs, including nutrition standards that align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
 - c. Research shows that these standards are effective at promoting good nutrition, and kids who eat school meals are more likely to consume nutritious foods like fruits, vegetables, and dairy products.
 - d. USDA continues to support efforts to enhance the health and quality of life of America’s children.
- 17. Why does my child have to take a fruit or a vegetable? Why are the portions so small? Are fruit and vegetable options included with every meal? Why doesn’t the food taste like the food in the restaurant?**
- a. The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program (NSLP and SBP, respectively) requirements are designed to provide age-appropriate meals to specific age/grade groups. For grades K-12, dietary specifications for calories, sodium, and saturated fat are in place to limit the risk of chronic diseases.
 - b. The NSLP requires five food components, each with daily and weekly minimums (see table below), including:
 1. Fruits
 2. Vegetables (including a grades K-12 weekly requirement for vegetable variety with minimum requirements for each of the 5 vegetable subgroups, including: dark green, red/orange, beans/peas (legumes), starchy, and “other” vegetables)
 3. Grains
 4. Meats/Meat Alternates
 5. Fluid Milk
 - c. For a chart detailing NSLP meal pattern requirements, please see:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/national-school-lunch-program-meal-pattern-chart>.
 - d. The SBP requires three food components, each with daily and weekly minimums (see table below), including:
 1. Fruits (Vegetables may be offered in place of fruit)
 2. Grains (Meats/Meat Alternates may be offered in place of Grains)
 3. Fluid Milk
 - e. For a chart detailing SBP meal pattern requirements, please see:

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<https://www.fns.usda.gov/resource/school-breakfast-program-meal-pattern-chart>

18. Why does USDA set meal patterns and dietary specifications for school meals?

- a. The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires school meals to reflect the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (Dietary Guidelines).
- b. Minimum standards for school meals are essential to help ensure that all schools nationwide follow uniform, science-based standards to deliver wholesome meals most efficiently and effectively.
- c. Minimum nutrition standards also support Program integrity and the responsible use of taxpayers' money by ensuring that children are offered wholesome foods that optimize health and academic achievement and minimize the risk of long-term chronic diseases.

19. Who decides what's on the menu?

- a. The Director of Nutrition Services creates the menu, based on the federal and state guidelines. We also do taste tests with students and get feedback from our team. Based on feedback and results of the taste tests, we select items. There are other factors to consider, such as nutritional value, cost, production, availability, labor, equipment, etc. to create a menu that meets operational capabilities.

20. Can I see the menu for each week and month? Is there a way for parents to get an accurate menu every month?

- a. Menus can be found on our website, www.walnutnutrition.org. Click on the menu tab.
- b. We create a menu with the goal of serving what's on the menu.
- c. Our menus are created month(s) in advance, so our team has time to place orders.
- d. We are still working through some ongoing supply chain issues with our vendors.
 - i. Some items may be discontinued without advanced notice.
 - ii. Some items are not available for delivery due to an extended lead time.
 - iii. Some items were substituted by the vendor.
 - iv. Some items may be recalled.

21. What if my student has a food allergy?

- a. Visit our website, www.walnutnutrition.org. Click on Medical Statement Form.
- b. Form must be completed by a state-licensed healthcare professional in California who is a licensed physician, a physician assistant, or a nurse practitioner.
- c. Once the form is completed, scan it, and send it to nutrition@wvusd.org.

22. What if my student is a vegetarian, vegan, does not eat pork, etc.?

- a. These are considered food preferences versus medical conditions.
- b. We are not required to provide meal accommodations, but we will consider reasonable accommodations.

23. Where do you buy the food?

- a. Our food is purchased from vendors who participate in the formal bid process.
- b. Walnut Valley USD is a member of the San Gabriel Valley Purchasing Cooperative (SGV Co-Op).

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- c. SGV Co-Op is comprised of 30 member districts throughout the San Gabriel Valley. SGV Co-Op bids various categories, such as paper, groceries, bread, dairy, frozen & refrigerated items, etc.
- d. We utilize our collective purchasing power to purchase items at the best price due to volume discounts while maintaining compliance with federal and state regulations that govern procurement practices.

24. Will we ever offer breakfast? Is breakfast different than brunch?

- a. Under the current regulations, we are required to offer enrolled students two meals every school day, to be consumed on campus.
- b. Breakfast and brunch are considered the same meal category. Lunch is the other category.
 - i. Some school bell schedules include breakfast and brunch periods. Nevertheless, the first meal is free, and the second is considered a second meal.

25. When do you serve breakfast/brunch? Does my child eat after I drop them off at school?

- a. Elementary Schools:
 - i. Breakfast/brunch is currently being served during the morning recess period. Please check your school's website for the bell schedule. We are not currently serving breakfast before the bell at elementary schools.
- b. Middle and High Schools:
 - i. Breakfast is served before the bell.
 - ii. Brunch is served at some of the middle and high schools. Please check your school's website for the bell schedule.

26. Why don't we offer programs like Rowland USD and Hacienda La Puente USD?

- a. The demographics of Walnut Valley USD are different from Rowland and Hacienda La Puente. We are considered a low free/reduced district, while Rowland and Hacienda La Puente are high free/reduced districts.
- b. To qualify for most federal programs or grants the minimum is 45% - 55% free/reduced. Walnut Valley USD is typically around the mid 20% or low 30% free/reduced.

27. Why do we use the meal application form instead of the alternate income form like in some other districts?

- a. The purpose of the household meal application is to certify a student's eligibility for free or reduced-price meal benefits. Federal regulations require districts operating standard meal counting and collection procedures in the School Nutrition Programs to collect household meal applications.
- b. The purpose of the alternate income form is to identify that a student's household meets the income eligibility criteria so that they may be included in the district's unduplicated pupil count used to determine supplemental and concentration grants under Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF).
- c. Alternate income forms were developed to be used for LCFF purposes in instances when schools do not need to collect meal applications (e.g., a district operating Community Eligibility Provision or Provision 2).
- d. Districts that are not operating provisions will continue to be required to collect household meal applications under the California Universal Meals Program.

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