



## FAQs: WJCC School Meals



### **MENU OPTIONS:**

#### **Where can I find the school lunch menu?**

The menu is available on the school division's website home page. Scroll down and click on "Lunch Menu".

#### **What is the Farm to School program?**

We make an effort to source Virginia Grown produce, supporting our local farms and farmers. You will see "Locally Grown Veggie" on the lunch menus, and this varies seasonally. We have also been able to offer locally grown fruit, such as apples and melons. Free samples are often offered in the cafeteria so "make today a try day!" WJCC has some successful school and community gardens that are able to contribute herbs and produce to school cafeterias. Agricultural literacy is a goal of our farm to school program. Students take great pride in knowing some of the food comes from their own garden, where they have learned, tended, and harvested.

#### **What are the Fresh Veggie Bars?**

Each Thursday, they offer an array of fresh, seasonal, raw veggies for students to choose from, with a variety of dipping sauces. Surveys show younger kids prefer raw over cooked veggies and they like to dip their food!

#### **I heard the Fresh Veggie Bars have "aged up"?**

Yes, the Fresh Veggie Bars are also offered at middle schools so that our new 6<sup>th</sup> graders who enjoyed them in elementary school may also enjoy them in middle school.

#### **What are the Café Carts?**

High school breakfast participation has increased with our carts, which offer another point of sale more convenient to students. The carts offer popular breakfast items, including smoothies, coffee and tea, for high school students on their way to class. There are meal and a la carte options.

#### **May my student choose a Fruit and Yogurt Parfait or Smoothie as a meal?**

Fruit and Yogurt Smoothies are very popular as a high school breakfast meal when served with a grain or breakfast bread choice. Your student may add a milk to complete that meal, if they would like. Some other schools offer Fruit and Yogurt Parfaits as a breakfast meal choice. Your student may add another fruit and a milk to complete that meal, if they would like. The Parfaits and Smoothies are also sold a la carte at lunch, while supplies last.

#### **Tell me about the made-to-order deli subs in the high schools?**

Some high schools offer freshly made, custom made deli subs. Students choose from a whole grain sub roll, flatbread or tortilla and then choose their meat and cheese and then load it up with veggies, topping it off with their choice of homemade dressings. This is available at their usual free, reduced, or paid meal price.

#### **I heard the school cafeterias have worked with professional chefs?**

In addition to some of our cafeteria managers who are chefs, we have partnered with local volunteer chefs over the years to have them help us with our menus and recipes and cooking clubs. They also have participated in our staff training to help continue to raise the expectations for school meals.

#### **Do the schools serve breakfast?**

Yes, all our schools serve breakfast! The menu is available in the top left corner of the lunch menu. Complete meals, yogurt parfaits, fruit smoothies, and grab and go options are available. Some schools have "Breakfast in the Classroom" and mobile café carts. In

addition to some “old school” breakfast favorites, your student may choose from cereal, baked goods, yogurt, fresh fruit & more. Your student may be eligible for a free or reduced price breakfast. Contact the Child Nutrition Services office at 565-3838.

### **What fresh items are on the menu?**

Every day at every school, we have fresh fruits, and/or fresh side salad or fresh vegetable choices. Many entrees have fresh ingredients added for flavor and good nutrition. We often source fresh Virginia Grown produce from local farms. We pride ourselves on having “something fresh every day”!

### **What side dishes may my student choose?**

Check the printed lunch menu which clearly shows what and how many a student may choose. Side grains, such as brown rice or whole grain pasta are offered if the entrée does not contain a grain. Side fruits that are fresh, canned, dried or frozen are available daily and elementary and middle school students may choose one serving; high school students may choose two. Side veggies are available daily and all students at all grades may choose two.

### **If we usually pack our lunch, what do you have that we can add to our lunch?**

A variety of snacks and treats – all Wellness Policy compliant – are available for purchase. Your student may also purchase milk, yogurt, fresh raw veggies with dip, fresh fruit, a cheese stick, or other items that are often tricky to keep adequately cold in a packed lunch.

### **Where are the salt shakers and salt packets?**

In an effort to reduce the sodium content of our meals and to be in compliance with the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act sodium targets, we no longer provide salt shakers or salt packets to season our menu items. Our café teams have received training about seasoning with fresh and dried herbs, fresh vegetables, and other alternatives.

### **Why do we have pizza days?**

Just like families might have certain days where they have certain customs, students can count on one of their favorite foods being offered on certain days. We offer school pizza, Domino's, Uno's, and at some schools, Papa Murphy's pizza. We have great participation on these days, and students are guaranteed a healthy lunch when they come to school.

### **It seems like the portions are small in school meals. Why is that?**

Americans suffer from portion distortion. We are used to eating too much, too many, too often. The National School Lunch Program specifies portions that are in line with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020 (see <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/dietary-guidelines>). Children are receiving a healthy portion of all 5 food groups when they participate in the school meal program.

### **Why are some seemingly unhealthy foods offered?**

Most of our foods are, in fact, healthy due to manufacturing and preparation modifications. For example, all breaded products are baked in our convection ovens, not fried. All grains are whole grains. We want students, staff and families to consider the whole meal when evaluating the healthfulness of school food. Taking an entrée with the fruit, vegetables, grain or bread, and milk components of a school lunch or breakfast creates a balanced, healthy meal. Over the course of a week, our menus meet nutrition standards for trans-fat, saturated fat, sodium, and calories. We are trying to teach children that all foods can fit in a healthy, balanced diet. Balance is a key to a healthy diet. In moderation, another key to a healthy diet, you can eat all foods that you enjoy.

### **Why do we serve “French fries”?**

More good news – all of our potato “fries” are actually oven baked. Potatoes are a favorite vegetable choice for many of our students. Over 10 years ago, a grant from the Williamsburg Health Foundation allowed us to put state of the art convection ovens in our schools that did not have them. We even have tasty sweet potato “fries”, rich in fiber and Vitamin A.

### **What is a Dutch Waffle?**

Our new Dutch Waffle replaces the former very popular Funnel Cake as a healthier option. This is not the waffle you get at the state fair - Dutch Waffles are baked not fried and they are a small 5-inch serving. They are made with whole grains, are trans-fat free, and have less sugar than a muffin & cereal. They are offered just once a week and we have our best school breakfast participation rates on Dutch Waffle day!

### **Why are there so many different vegetables and side salads offered?**

Over the course of a week, we have to offer certain numbers of servings from five different vegetable subgroups: dark green, red/orange, legumes, starchy and “other”. This variety is another key to a healthy diet. By offering the wide variety of veggies prepared

in a variety of ways, kids are exposed to new vegetables they might be willing to try. Students in ALL grades may choose two servings of veggies every day as part of a complete meal.

**I heard the schools have great salads. What kind do you have?**

Each week, there are a variety of freshly prepared entrée salads in the elementary and middle schools. We offer Chef, Asian Chicken, Taco, Chicken Strip, Southwest Chicken, and Strawberry Spinach Chicken entrée salads. Each entrée salad meal includes bread or grain (such as whole grain crackers or the bread of the day) and milk. At some schools, due to cold holding limitations, your student may have to ask the server for the salad if it is not on display on the serving line. Just ask!

**Are there salad bars in the schools?**

Salad bars were offered at all three high schools starting in March 2009, thanks to a generous grant from the Williamsburg Health Foundation. The salad bars offer a wide variety of fresh ingredients, to include locally grown produce. The salad bars are self-serve and monitored by a Child Nutrition Services staff member. To-go packaging is also available. The student salad bar meal meets the USDA meal pattern and is available to all free, reduced and paid lunch customers at their usual lunch meal price. Each Thursday is Taco Salad day in the high schools. Watch for special salad bar promotions such as Frequent Shopper Cards and Free Soup with Salad deals.

**Do school foods contain additives and preservatives?**

Yes, we serve thousands of meals a day and need food that is safe. Take a look at the resource “Do You Have Questions about Food Safety?” at the School Nutrition Resources link on the Child Nutrition Services webpage.

**What are the Yogurt Combos?**

Students may choose a healthy meal of low fat yogurt combos along with one fruit and two veggies and milk. This has been a very popular option for elementary school students.

**Why do some of the entrees sound like fast food choices?**

The good news is those classic entrees are all specially chosen and specially prepared for our students. For example, the hot dogs are turkey dogs, all grains are whole grains, and the grilled cheese sandwich is reduced fat cheese on whole grain bread. Preparation is modified too. Unlike many fast foods, we bake our entrees in convection ovens. Participation is key to the success of the school lunch program. We are able to serve foods that kids like, but that are also healthy.

**Did I see ice cream for sale?**

No, our frozen desserts are a popular brand, but they are modified for schools. Portion sizes are small. The milk is non fat, low fat or reduced fat milk, not cream. Some are made from juice or yogurt. All items meet “Smart Snacks in Schools” regulations.

**MEAL PRICING AND PAYMENT:**

**Some of the food seems expensive, is it?**

Meal prices are the best deal. A school breakfast meal consists of grains, two fruits, and milk for just \$1.35 (elementary) and a school lunch meal consists of meat/meat alternate, grains, fruit, two vegetables and milk for just \$2.70 (elementary). Bottled drinks and snacks are offered at a la carte pricing.

**How much are drinks and snacks?**

Price lists are clearly posted in each school cafeteria. Price lists are also available at <http://wjccschools.org/departments/operations/child-nutrition-services/school-nutrition-resources/>

**How can I pay for my student’s meals?**

Every student is assigned a student meal account.

1. “My School Bucks” is an online option for funding your student’s meal account. You can fund the account online for a small service fee. Visit [www.mySchoolBucks.com](http://www.mySchoolBucks.com) or call Child Nutrition Services at 565-3838 for instructions.
2. You may write a check to your student’s cafeteria (please include your student’s meal account number on the check).
3. Your student may pay with cash and ask that the extra be applied to his or her meal account.
4. You may pay with a check or cash at the cafeteria during normal operating hours.

**How can I find out about the Free and Reduced Price Meal Program?**

Your student may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals. Visit your school's main office or call Child Nutrition Services at 565-3838 for more information. Free and reduced price meal information and applications are available in both paper and online formats in both English and Spanish.

## **RULES AND REGULATIONS:**

### **What are the latest improvements in school food?**

Locally, our menus include more “made from scratch” or “speed scratch” entrees. We are constantly working on recipe modifications and recipe development to improve school food. Our focus is also on the 3 P's: production, preparation and presentation. Our staff and student customers have restaurant quality expectations which we aim to meet or exceed.

### **What is this in the news about school meal regulations?**

The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act was passed in 2011 to update meal patterns and nutrition standards for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs and to align them with the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This will increase the availability of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat free milk while reducing the levels of sodium, saturated fat, and trans-fat in meals. These improvements are expected to improve the diet and health of school children and lessen the childhood obesity trend.

### **What are the nutrition standards for school meals?**

We monitor our menus for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. The macronutrients, protein, carbohydrate and fat, are controlled by the meal pattern which specifies meat/meat alternate, whole grains, fruits, vegetables and fluid nonfat or lowfat milk.

### **Did anything change in the rules for breakfast?**

Yes – students are offered a breakfast meal consisting of whole grains, a full cup of fruit and milk. Protein is now optional. According to the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act, students must choose a fruit at breakfast for a complete meal.

### **What are the lunch meal pattern requirements?**

Each day, we offer a balanced meal with at least five components – a meat/meat alternate, fruit, vegetables, grain, and milk. Under the new regulations, students must choose a fruit or vegetable with their lunch for a complete meal. A complete meal is available at the meal price and is the best deal. Students in grades 1-12 may decline two of the five offered components.

### **What are “professional standards for nutrition programs personnel”?**

The Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act included detailed standards for professional development and training of the dedicated workers in the growing field of school nutrition. These went into effect July 1, 2015. Areas of expertise include nutrition, operations, administration and communication/marketing to ensure they have thorough, up to date training.

### **What is the “Smart Snacks in Schools” rule?**

Federal regulations now govern food and beverage snacks that may be sold in school cafes, vending machines, school stores, snack bars and as fundraisers during the school day. There is a Smart Snack calculator available at [https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take\\_action/schools/snacks\\_and\\_beverages/smart\\_snacks/alliance\\_product\\_calculator/](https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take_action/schools/snacks_and_beverages/smart_snacks/alliance_product_calculator/) to help you determine if food and beverage items are compliant.

### **What is the school division’s Student Wellness Policy?**

The Policy is available at <http://www.boarddocs.com/vsba/wjcc/Board.nsf/Public?open&id=policies#> and the accompanying Regulations are available at <http://www.boarddocs.com/vsba/wjcc/Board.nsf/Public?open&id=policies#>.

### **Tell me about Wellness Policy updates?**

The updated policy sets division wide standards for the types of snacks served in all cafes, classrooms, student stores and meetings, and for fundraisers and parties or celebrations throughout all schools. Every occasion anywhere on the school campus during the school day offers the same healthy food and beverage opportunity. These division wide standards are based on Federal “Smart Snacks in Schools” regulations.

### **May we still have classroom parties and celebrations?**

Yes! We can still celebrate and show students that it can be done either without food, with nonfood treats and gifts, or with healthy Wellness Policy compliant snacks. For your convenience, healthy and compliant snacks may be ordered from your school cafeteria. There are also healthy celebration resources on the SHIP website.

**Does the Wellness Policy control what I pack for my student in his lunch box or for his snack?**

No, that is up to you as a parent. You can find healthy lunch and snack ideas at the SHIP website.

**Do school menus have foods with trans-fats?**

No, this is another provision of the USDA regulations. Major sources of trans-fat have been identified and eliminated from breakfast and lunch choices.

**OTHER:**

**What are the “a la carte” options?**

Students may purchase meal items “a la carte” if they would like, as well as healthy snacks. Some students choose to purchase extra portions of entrees, some choose milk or items like fresh fruit to complement their lunch packed from home, and some choose snacks to save for after school activities, such as sports practice. All snacks meet federal Smart Snacks in Schools rules and WJCC Student Wellness Policy nutrition standards. These standards limit portion size, calorie, sugar, fat and sodium content. Snacks include baked chips, reduced fat products, 100% juices, and more.

**How can I control the food choices my child makes at school?**

You can call the Child Nutrition Services office at 565-3838 or email [jane.haley@wjccschools.org](mailto:jane.haley@wjccschools.org) to request that a note be put on your child’s lunch account to limit the number of snacks or certain items that may be purchased with lunch account funds.

**I saw vending machines in the high schools. Are they healthy?**

Thanks to a generous grant from the Williamsburg Health Foundation, the three high schools have model vending programs. Stocked by Child Nutrition Services and located near the cafeteria, the machines are refrigerated and offer healthy snacks and meal items. They include milk, yogurt, wraps, sandwiches, and ice cold water. The machines are available to students before school, in case they missed breakfast, during lunch when they need to grab a meal and run to a class for makeup work, as well as after school when they need a healthy snack before sports practice or while waiting for the bus.

**Where can I get more information about nutrition and healthy eating?**

You can go to the WJCC Public Schools website. Visit <http://wjccschools.org/departments/operations/child-nutrition-services/> for “School Nutrition Resources” which include carbohydrate and nutrition information for our menu items. You will also see helpful “Wellness Is a Way of Life” newsletters.

**Tell me more about SHIP?**

The School Health Initiative Program (SHIP) promotes healthy eating and physical activity in our schools. One of SHIP’s major programs is its partnership with Child Nutrition Services. Click here <http://wjccschools.org/departments/student-services/ship/> or find the link to SHIP at the school division’s home page-at the top click on “Departments” and then on the right side choose “Student Services” and SHIP.

**SPECIAL REQUESTS:**

**My child is a vegetarian. Can she participate in the school meal program?**

Yes! We offer several vegetarian options, including many side dishes. We offer a Meatless Monday choice and a new “7 Layer Dip Salad” and are always developing new recipes.

**My child has food allergies. Can he participate in the school meal program?**

Yes! If your student requires meal substitutions because of a disability, our schools will make substitutions prescribed by a licensed physician. Our schools offer gluten free menu options for students with properly diagnosed and documented needs. We can also accommodate other physician prescribed modified diets. Please contact your school nurse for further information.

**My child has lactose intolerance. What are her beverage options?**

Your child may choose 100% fruit juice as her fruit choice for her meal or she may purchase bottled water. With a parent's or licensed physician's written request, your child may choose lactose free milk in place of regular fluid milk. Students without documentation may purchase lactose free milk at a la carte pricing. Free tap water from the fountain or coolers is also provided by the cafeteria.

**Follow the School Health Initiative Program (SHIP) on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest to learn more about healthy school meals.**

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