

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We can't wait to welcome students back to the cafeteria for the 2023-2024 school year! To kick off the new year, we wanted to share a few things you and your child can look forward to when it comes to mealtime, information on meal pricing and steps to apply for free and reduced-price meals, how we manage food allergies and the documentation needed, and an inside look at our program.

### Food Kids Love to Eat

Chartwells' team of chefs and dietitians are working to bring even more variety to our menus featuring new recipes with kid-approved foods. This year we're serving up:

- Elementary Schools – Back to 3 lunch options
- Locally produced/grown products such as local beef and local produce from Narragansett Creamery (Providence, RI), Gotham Greens (Providence, RI), Young Family Farm (Little Compton, RI) and Meatworks (Westport, MA) along with several other local farms!



The value of school lunch is top of mind as families continue to experience inflation and growing food costs at home. In addition to giving kids the chance to try new foods and cut back on food waste, school lunch provides students with healthy, balanced, and safe meals at an affordable price, while saving families time and stress.

# Lots to Love about School Lunch!



## Healthy, Balanced, Safe Meals



We oversee\* what goes on the plate so you don't have to!

- ☑ Tastes great
- ☑ Limited sodium
- ☑ Lots of delicious fruits, veggies, and chilled low-fat milk

Additionally, school kitchens always meet or exceed state guidelines for safe food, including keeping hot food hot and cold food cold until it's served. With plenty of warm, filling options there's no need for your child to wait at the microwave to heat their packed lunch.

\*by following USDA NSLP Guidelines

## Power of Choice



With multiple daily options for entrees and sides, kids have the power to choose what they want to eat every day!

## Take Back Your Time



Add up the time you spend planning meals, grocery shopping, prepping and packing lunches, and cleaning the lunch box. You can put more time back in your day by leaving meals to us.

## Compare Costs



Compare the cost of soaring grocery store prices on standard lunch items and fresh produce to the cost of the school lunch. Add in any costs for baggies, cutlery, icepacks and lunchboxes. You may be surprised at which option provides the best value!

## Less Waste



We all know kids can be picky. Buying lunch means they get to choose what they want to eat each day rather than throwing away any unwanted food packed in their lunch.

## No-Stress Payment



Gone are the days when your child has to carry cash to purchase school lunch. Being able to load their account ahead of time gives you one less thing to think about each day.

## Try Something New!



Packed lunches often consist of the same rotation of foods. School lunch gives your child the opportunity to try different foods every day.

Our team of chefs and dietitians are constantly developing new recipes that keep up with trends (and are kid-approved)!



### **Meal Cost and Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications**

For the 2023-24 school year, elementary breakfast will cost \$1.30 and elementary lunch will cost \$2.70. Secondary breakfast will cost \$1.45 and secondary lunch will cost \$2.95. Free or Reduced-Price Meals are available again this year to students who qualify for these benefits, but all students, regardless of family situations, are encouraged to dine in the cafeteria together.

**We encourage all families, regardless of income, to complete and submit a short, confidential school meal application prior to the start of the school year to ensure that there are no gaps in meal benefits for students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals.** Families can submit this application online <https://www.myschoolapps.com/Application>. It's an easy and confidential way to ensure your child stays well-nourished at school.



## Food Allergies and Special Dietary Needs

We recognize the critical importance of our approach to supporting students and families who manage food allergy issues every day and work closely with the families of students who have food allergies and medical conditions that require a modification to their menu. Our approach involves coordination between parents and guardians, school nurses, school administrators, and food service professionals in the school's/district's food allergy and medical conditions protocol. If you would like your child to receive meal accommodations for food allergies or a medical condition impacting the diet, please ensure that you submit the required documentation to your child's school.

In order to modify the school meal, we must have a written Medical Statement on file signed by a licensed medical provider (physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner). The statement must identify the following:

- Information about the child's impairment that is sufficient for understanding how it restricts the child's diet
- An explanation of what must be done to accommodate the child's disability, and
- If appropriate, the food(s) to be omitted, texture modifications, and recommended substitutions.

For any children who are currently receiving or need to receive meal accommodations, please contact Melissa Read via our Office Administrator, Jen Viens at 401-270-8138 or [Jennifer.viens@compass-usa.com](mailto:Jennifer.viens@compass-usa.com) to review the meal accommodation plan, which may require additions or amendments based on the ongoing supply chain issues.

As part of our protocol, café managers review food labels for foods used to produce special meals daily. We may encounter situations where product substitutions are made that contain different allergens or have a different nutritional profile than our usual menu items. As a result, we may need to provide a meal that is different than previously identified for students with special dietary needs to ensure that the meal served to them remains in adherence to their needs as outlined in their medical forms.

### **If you have food allergies or need a special menu, please speak up!**

Ask your cafeteria manager if changes were made to today's menu so we can help keep you safe!

While we have posted signs in the cafeteria encouraging students with food allergies or other dietary concerns to speak up, we encourage you to remind your child to be sure to check with the cafeteria manager regarding product substitutions that may not be reflected in the posted menu. We will make every attempt to update Nutrislice in real-time, but please do not solely rely on nutrition or allergen information on Nutrislice to accommodate allergies or medical conditions in the event of last-minute menu changes.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your student's allergies or dietary needs, please don't hesitate to reach out to Melissa Read. We are committed to providing safe meals for all students.



# Global Eats

## Programs that Encourage Fun and Discovery

Chartwells continues to inspire healthy eating habits and spark a culinary curiosity to last a lifetime through fun and engaging programs, including:

- **Global Eats:** Highlighting the unique ingredients and authentic flavors from cuisines around the world, Global Eats brings a world of flavors to the cafeteria. Our newest signature program takes students on a food exploration that celebrates cultural heritages, traveling through China, India, Italy, Mexico, and more.
- **Discovery Kitchen:** Designed to make nutrition education fun and entertaining, Chartwells chefs and dietitians have worked together to create curriculums that get kids cooking, trying new foods, and learning about what they're eating. Each month has a different theme and activities will be adapted for the current meal programs.
- **Mood Boost:** This innovative program helps elementary and middle school students connect what they eat with how they feel. It features recipes and characters that focus on six moods: Smart, Happy, Confident, Alert, Strong and Calm.

## Inviting Environments & Happy Cafeterias

Students need a place to eat where they can connect with others, recharge, and enjoy a sense of happiness and a with their classmates.

## Menus and Nutrition Facts at Your Fingertips

Through Nutrislice, an innovative app, students, parents and faculty have access to school menus, including nutrition information, allergens and photos. Nutrislice can be downloaded for free from the App store (iOS) or Google Play (Android) and is available on desktop and mobile devices. Menus are also available at <https://epschoolsri.nutrislice.com/menu> .



## Celebrating Our School Lunch Heroes

As kids advance from grade to grade with new classes and different teachers, the dedicated lunch ladies and men in the school cafeteria are often one of the few constants throughout the academic journey. Throughout the school year, these heroes of the cafeteria are dedicated to making mealtime a bright spot in a student's day, ensuring kids throughout the East Providence community are served nourishing meals.



We are always looking for talented individuals to join the dining services team with perks including, family friendly schedules that follow the academic calendar, hiring incentives, and more. For more information, visit the <https://careers.compassgroupcareers.com/hourly> website or contact our office administrator, Jen Viens at Jennifer.viens@compass.com or 401-270-8138.

Through sharing our passion for great tasting food, instilling a desire for food discovery, and most importantly, providing nourishing meals, we're excited to continue serving up happy and healthy to your children in the year ahead.

We love hearing from families, and your feedback is important to us. Please reach out to our team with any questions or comments. We're looking forward to a great school year!

Thank you,  
Melissa Read  
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melissa.read@compass-usa.com  
401-270-8138