

Available programs during School Year 2021-2022 include the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)/School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO). The USDA has provided several meal pattern flexibilities for the School Nutrition Programs to support access to nutritious meals while minimizing potential exposure to COVID-19. The following chart describes the meal pattern flexibilities available. **Guidance on how to apply for these waivers will be released shortly.** Please note that this chart is a simplified version of the meal pattern requirements for the School Nutrition Programs, including the Seamless Summer Option, and more detailed information regarding the nutrition regulations for these programs can be reviewed in the [School Nutrition Programs Administrative Handbook](#). Questions can be submitted to [CNP@isbe.net](mailto:CNP@isbe.net).

| School Nutrition Programs Meal Pattern Chart   |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) |   |  |
|  | SBP & SSO Breakfast   | NSLP & SSO Lunch   |
| <b>Components</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grains</li> <li>Fruit</li> <li>Milk</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grains</li> <li>Meat/Meat Alternate</li> <li>Fruit</li> <li>Vegetable</li> <li>Milk</li> </ul>                        |
| Grains   | Required; 100% of grain offerings must be whole grain-rich <sup>1,4</sup>   | Required; 100% of grain offerings must be whole grain-rich <sup>1,4</sup>  |
| Meat/ Meat Alternate   | Not required; may contribute to grain component   | Required   |
| Fruit  | Required; no more than 50% of weekly offerings may be in the form of 100% juice   | Required; no more than 50% of weekly offerings may be in the form of 100% juice  |
| Vegetable  | Not required; may contribute to fruit component if offered <sup>3</sup>   | Required; minimum serving size requirements must be met weekly for each vegetable subgroup: red/orange, dark green, legumes, starchy, and other <sup>4</sup> |
| Milk   | Required; flavored or unflavored non-fat (skim) or (1%) <sup>3,4</sup> ; must offer at least 2 varieties <sup>2,4</sup> | Required; flavored or unflavored non-fat (skim) or (1%) <sup>3,4</sup> ; must offer at least 2 varieties <sup>2,4</sup>                                      |
| <b>Serving Sizes</b>   | Must meet serving size requirements based on grade groups: K-5, 6-8, or 9-12 <sup>4</sup>                               | Must meet serving size requirements based on grade groups: K-5, 6-8, or 9-12 <sup>4</sup>  |
| <b>Dietary Specifications</b>  | Weekly limits for calories, sodium <sup>1,5</sup> , and saturated fat based on grade groups; no trans fat allowed       | Weekly limits for calories, sodium <sup>1,5</sup> , and saturated fat based on grade groups; no trans fat allowed  |
| <b>Offer Versus Serve (OVS)</b>  | Not required  | Required for grades 9-12 in the NSLP <sup>6</sup>  |

<sup>1</sup>Under the USDA's [COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #74](#), sponsors may extend the flexibilities for milk, whole grains, and sodium provided by the USDA's vacated [Final Rule](#). This allows sponsors to 1) serve half of the weekly grains as whole grain-rich (any remaining grains served must be enriched), 2) maintain Sodium Target 1, and 3) offer flavored 1% milk (this flexibility continues to be available under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021<sup>3</sup>). Sponsors must notify the State Agency of their request for this waiver. Approved waivers are effective from July 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021. Following this date, sponsors must adhere to the meal pattern requirements above if they do not have any approvals under the [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Specific School Meal Pattern Flexibility for School Year 2021-2022](#)<sup>4,5</sup>.

<sup>2</sup>The USDA's [COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #74](#) provides the opportunity to waive the requirement that sponsors must offer a variety (at least two different options) of fluid milk. Sponsors must apply for this waiver by notifying the State Agency. Approved waivers are effective from July 1, 2021 through September 30, 2021. Following this date, sponsors can no longer waive milk variety requirements without an approved waiver (refer to the [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Specific School Meal Pattern Flexibility for School Year 2021-2022](#)<sup>4</sup>).

<sup>3</sup>Through the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 and USDA memo [SP 11-2021](#), sponsors may provide vegetables from any subgroup, including starchy, in place of fruit at breakfast without including vegetables from other subgroups first. Through the flexibilities provided, sponsors may also offer flavored 1% milk during the meal service. Both flexibilities are available through September 30, 2021. No action is needed on behalf of sponsors to use these flexibilities. Following this date, sponsors can no longer offer flavored 1% milk without an approved waiver (refer to the [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Specific School Meal Pattern Flexibility for School Year 2021-2022](#)<sup>4</sup>).

<sup>4</sup>Through the USDA's [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Specific School Meal Pattern Flexibility for School Year 2021-2022](#), sponsors participating in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Seamless Summer Option may apply on a case-by-case basis to waive whole grain-rich, vegetable subgroup, milk type and variety, and/or grade group serving size requirements. Requests must be targeted and justified based on plans to support access to nutritious meals while minimizing potential exposure to COVID-19. Requests will be approved or denied on a case-by-case basis. Approved waivers will be effective starting October 1, 2021. Sponsors without approved waivers must meet the meal pattern requirements above.

<sup>5</sup>The USDA is allowing sponsors to waive sodium requirements in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and Seamless Summer Option through the [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Specific School Meal Pattern Flexibility for School Year 2021-2022](#). All requests submitted through the ISBE waiver process will be automatically approved and effective starting October 1, 2021. Sponsors with an approved waiver must still meet Sodium Target 1 requirements. Sponsors that do not submit a request through the ISBE waiver process must meet the Sodium Target 2 requirements.

<sup>6</sup>Through the USDA's [Nationwide Waiver to Allow Offer Versus Serve Flexibility for Senior High Schools in School Year 2021-2022](#), NSLP sponsors may request to waive the requirement for lunch to be Offer Versus Serve (OVS) for grades 9-12. This waiver is not necessary for SBP and SSO sponsors, as OVS is not required. NSLP sponsors must apply for this waiver by notifying the State Agency. Approved waivers are effective from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.