



August 15, 2022

Dear Ann Arbor Public School Parents and Guardians,

Chartwells Food Service is thrilled to welcome your students back to school and to the nutritious and tasty meals that we will be serving students during the 2022-2023 school year! To kick off the new school year, we wanted to share a few things you and your child can look forward to when it comes to mealtime and get an inside look at the new recipes, concepts, and programs we will be introducing this fall.

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 are pleased to serve the middle and high school students new items like BBQ sundae and chicken curry. All schools will be serving yogurt parfaits, vegetarian and vegan salad options.

Free and Reduced-Price Meals

For the past two years, during the height of the COVID pandemic, all schools nationwide were able to provide free meals to all students through a federally funded program. *At this time, the free meal program has expired*, so schools must return to charging for breakfast and lunch. Free or reduced-price meals are available to students who qualify for these benefits. For the 2022-23 school year, breakfast will cost \$1.75 and lunch will cost \$2.75-\$4.00.

The goal of the Chartwell's meal program for the Ann Arbor Public Schools is to support all students and families to ensure students who need free meals at school continue to receive them – especially understanding that the pandemic has created new hardships for many families, including those who have never previously relied on school meals. We also understand that many households have not submitted a meal application in two years.

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. Parents or guardians can submit this application online [Food Service / Free & Reduced Meal Application / Household Information Reports \(a2schools.org\)](#) or in person at your child's school office. It's an easy and confidential way to ensure your child stays well-nourished at school.

Meal Magic Family Portal - <https://annarbor.familyportal.cloud/>

Meal Magic Family portal provides an easy to use, efficient way to make payments quickly and securely anytime using a simple internet connection. Family Portal runs in real time so the payment will show at the school in seconds. Family Portal also offers the following features:

- Tutorials on how to navigate Family Portal
- Make online deposits to your student's meal account
- View purchase and payment histories, and account activity at no cost
- Set up reminders for when your student's balance is low

- Transfer funds among siblings
- Fill out Free and Reduced Meal Applications.

Food Allergies and Special Dietary Needs

We recognize the critical importance of supporting students and families who manage food allergy issues every day. Our commitment is to always 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 foodservice professionals following the Ann Arbor Public Schools food allergy and medical conditions policy..

If you would like your child to receive meal accommodation for food allergies or a medical condition impacting their diet, please submit the required documentation to your child's school. The form is available at this link. <https://www.a2schools.org/cms/lib/MI01907933/Centricity/Domain/2311/Special%20Dietary%20Needs%20Form%20Revised%207-2022.pdf>. You may share it with your school nurse and email the completed form to our Dietary Team at aaps_dietary_requests@aaps.k12.mi.us

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

For any children who are currently receiving meal accommodation, please contact Chartwell Assistant Manager Mike Devries at 734-994-2265 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; however, we are facing unprecedented food supply issues and while we are doing everything we can to minimize disruptions to our program, we do expect to experience continued shortages and substitutions. Therefore, 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.

While we have signs posted 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 allergy 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 Victoria Davis, the Food Service Director, at 734-994-2265. We are committed to providing safe meals for all students.

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:

- **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 to 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..

Menus, 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://a2schools.nutrislice.com/>

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. Whether they're at the ready with a spoon, spatula, or welcoming smile, these school lunch heroes go above and beyond to not only serve foods kids love to eat, but to ensure that students leave the cafeteria happier and healthier than they came in.

We are always looking for talented individuals to join the dining service team with perks including family-friendly schedules, no night or weekend work, hiring incentives, and more. For more information, visit the website - <https://www.a2schools.org/Page/555>

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 meals to students this year.

We love hearing from parents, 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,

Victoria Davis, Director of Dining Services