

2019-2020

**Parent Handbook
For the School Meal Programs**

VERMILION LOCAL SCHOOLS



Food & Nutrition Services Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Vermilion Local Schools Food Service Department to fuel our student's bodies so their minds are ready for optimal learning. We are committed to serving quality nutritious food to our students daily.

National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs

The Vermilion Local School district participates in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. Under these programs all schools who participate must make free and reduced price meals available to eligible students. The menus are planned so that over a period of one week, school lunches will provide children with approximately one-third of the nutrients they need according to the Recommended Dietary Allowances and one-fourth for breakfast. The menus are planned using available government commodity food products from the United States Department of Agriculture as well as purchased food products.

The Food & Nutrition Department strives to promote the consumption of healthy meals and snacks. All food sold in the schools contribute to the daily nutritional needs of students and meet the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2011 and the dietary guidelines provided by the United States Department of Agriculture.

All A la Carte snack items sold in schools meet the new “Smart Snacks in Schools” guidelines established by the USDA in July 2014.

Lunch / Breakfast Meal Pattern

Each Lunch meal includes five components: an entree with two ounces of meat or meat alternative (beef, chicken, cheese and casseroles, etc.), one-two servings of bread, one (2 at the HS) servings of fruit, two servings of vegetables and an 8 oz. container of milk. To make a complete or combo meal, students must take at least three of the five components with one being a fruit or vegetable. We encourage students to take all five components to receive the greater value for the cost. Extra entrées may be purchased as well as a variety of a la carte items.

Each Breakfast meal includes three components with two servings of whole grain rich bread or one meat/protein and one WG bread serving (entrée), two servings of fruit and an 8 oz. milk. To make a complete breakfast all students must take a full serving of bread/meat entrée item, at least 1 serving of fruit and milk.

The Free and Reduced Price Lunch Program

Free and reduced price lunches are available to students who qualify and meet the eligibility guidelines. The student’s eligibility status carries over from the previous year for up to 30 operating days. However, the new eligibility determination supersedes the carry over eligibility. A new application must be completed by September 30th of the current school year. Parents / Guardians of returning students can update their child’s information online. This online application replaces completing paper forms for each child every year. Instead the parent/guardian can complete necessary school forms easily and conveniently.

Direct Certification is done three times during the school year to help identify students who qualify for free meals through Job and Family Services. Letters will be sent to those families that qualify with program information and a school fee waiver. Parents who are directly certified and wish to have their school fees waived must complete the form and return it to the Operations Department or the main office of the school their student attends. All students that qualify in the household can be included on one form.

Student new to the district can apply during new student registration. Free and Reduced benefits received from other districts do not extend to Vermilion Local Schools. A new application would need to be completed. Applications are processed in three to five business days. Students are responsible for any breakfast or lunch purchases until their benefits are approved. A determination letter will be sent to the parent or guardian once completed.

Ritter Public Library offers computers for public use and a computer is available at the Administration office throughout the summer. If a parent or guardian needs assistance with completing their application an appointment can be made with the Operations Assistant at 440-204-1716.

Applications are accepted any time during the school year. Parents who have any change in employment or income during any time of the year may apply for benefits in their Parent Portal in PowerSchool.

Foster children automatically qualify for free lunch once an application is received and approved in the Operations Office.

Free and Reduced benefits are for lunch and breakfast only. Students who pack their lunch do not receive free milk. Any ala carte items would also be an additional purchase.

No child is discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, or handicap.

Lunch / Breakfast Meal Prices

Our food service program is self-supporting financially through the funds received from payment for student meals. We do our best to keep the lunch prices reasonable and offer the highest quality meals and service to your child each day.

Lunch

Elementary \$2.50 Reduced \$.40
SMS, VHS \$2.65 Reduced \$.40
Milk \$0.55

Breakfast

Elementary \$1.60 Reduced \$.30
SMS, VHS \$1.60 Reduced \$.30

Ala Carte Items

Unless parents request otherwise, students are permitted to use money on their account to buy additional entrees items and snacks offered in the cafeteria. Students who pack their lunch may use the money on their account for milk purchases. Students who are approved for the Free and Reduced program have to pay for milk purchases, as well as, any ala carte items. **Parents may request to restrict their students from purchasing ala carte or place spending limits on their accounts** by writing or by phone to the Operations Office at 440-204-1716

How to Pay for Lunches

The Vermilion Local School District has a computerized point-of-sale (POS) system that makes paying for meals so much easier. Families don't need to worry about sending money every day and be concerned about it getting lost.

Benefits of using the Pay For It System

- √ Staff and Students receive faster service at the register.
- √ Full-pay, reduced, and Free Meal Status accounts are handled in the same manner.
- √ Detailed information and meal account reports are available to families
- √ Accurate records for state and federal reporting purposes are generated.

How does the point-of-sale system work?

Each student has his/her own STUDENT MEAL ACCOUNT, complete with a digit personal identification number, PIN. The account may be accessed by using IDconnect Biometrics. This system is one directional. This id program creates an id number that is unique to your student. It will protect from losing or forgetting an id number or errors when students are at the point-of-sale. The student's photo appears on the screen when the student's finger is placed on the pad. The cashier is required to verify the student's identity before ringing the sale and an automatic withdrawal occurs from the student's meal account. Money can be deposited into the account at any time, as often as needed. We recommend pre-paying "at least" one week in advance. Money put on a child's account can take up to 24 hours to post.

Paying by Cash or Check in the school cafeteria.

Students paying with check or cash **must be brought to the cafeteria in the A.M. All money will be placed on the student's lunch account. No change will be given to students.**

Checks should be made payable to Vermilion Local Schools. Please write student name, building name and PIN on check.

Pay For It

We are pleased to announce our online payment system, Pay For It. This system will allow you to make online payments to your child's lunch account. You also can make online payments to your child's fee account as well. We still accept **cash or checks** at our school offices. **Acceptance of credit or debit cards is solely for online use.**

You can access the online payment system by visiting our District website at www.vermilionschools.org Choose the PayForIt.net tab to be transferred to the payment site. Complete the registration page, and add your child's last name and ID number (you may enter up to five children). Once you have registered and created a password, you will not need the student ID number again. Payments may take up to 24 hours to post to your child's account. There will be a 3% convenience fee charged to your credit/debit card each time this service is used.

Account Balance Information

Notification of low or negative balances.

Parents and Guardians will be notified when their students receive a low or negative lunch account balance. Calls, emails and/or letters will be sent to the phone numbers and email addresses on file. Please keep this information current, so we can serve you better. Any change in personal information can be done in the Parent Portal in PowerSchool.

Meal Charges

Vermilion Local Schools will allow students to charge lunch only. Breakfast, milk and ala carte items are non-chargeable. Parents will be notified when their student's meal balances are in the negative by call, email and/or letter. Parents will be notified by letter when their student has charged two lunches. Parents will be notified and information regarding the Free and Reduced Program will be sent after five lunches are charged. Students who have an outstanding balance of \$15.00 for full pay students and \$7.50 for reduced. will be unable to continue to charge and will be given an alternative lunch. This alternative lunch will consist of a toasted cheese or peanut butter/soy butter sandwich, fruit, vegetable and milk. Any outstanding lunch charges will be added to the student's fees at the end of the school year.

Pre-payment for meals is strongly recommended.

What if my child still has money in his/her account at the end of the school year?

All remaining balances will carry over to the next school year unless a refund is requested. No refunds will be issued on balances of less than \$ 5.00 unless the student moves from the school district for graduates. Balances for students that have left the district or have graduated will first be applied to any outstanding fee balance or transferred to a sibling account before a refund will be issued. All money remaining on student meal accounts will be refunded to the parent or guardian only. Please contact the School Office at the building your student attends for information regarding the request for a student meal refund.

Menus

All menus are published and available online at www.vermilionschools.org. Click on the menus tab and the building your child attends. Or call the School Office or Operations Office at 440-204-1716 for assistance.

Cafeteria Manners

Each cafeteria has adult lunchroom monitors responsible for supervising and helping the children at lunchtime. These adults are hired, trained and supervised by the school principals to monitor the Lunchrooms and encourage good eating habits and good manners during meal and play time. Students are encouraged to use good manners in the dining room. This includes sitting at their seats until excused by the lunchroom monitor, talking softly at the table and cleaning up after themselves.

Food Allergies - Important Notice

Parents of students with allergies: The school nurses notify the cafeteria of any students with food allergies, and a copy of the doctor's order will be kept on file in the food service department, and will also be noted on our cash register system, alerting staff. A highlighted notice is put on your child's account in the dietary notes with the list of food restrictions. Please contact the school nurse if your child has any food allergies or restrictions.

Students who are lactose intolerant must have a written notice from a health care professional in order to receive an alternative drink in place of milk. USDA guidelines prohibit serving substitute drinks to students without written medical directives from a medical authority. Notes from parents requesting any beverage other than milk are not acceptable under USDA guidelines of the National School Lunch Program.

Food & Nutrition Services Nutrition Goals

Vermilion Local Schools welcome input from the school community including parents, teachers, food service staff and school personnel through annual meetings with student council groups, focal groups and parent/staff advisory committees.

Members of the District and the Director of Operations are working together to improve the nutritional integrity of the Vermilion Local Schools' student meal programs. Together we will make changes in the lunch program that will set nutrition standards for all foods and beverages sold as meals and for food sold as ala carte items.

Food & Nutrition Services Administrative Staff

Vermilion Local Schools Operations Department

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