

Offer Versus Serve

Fact Sheet for Foodservice

- Offer Versus Serve (OVS) is when students have the ability to decline a certain amount of items/components as they select their meal for breakfast and lunch.
- OVS is required at lunch for grades 9-12. It is not required, but is allowable for grades K-8 at lunch and K-12 at breakfast.
- Choices are not the same as OVS. Choices allow students to pick from a variety of entrée, vegetable, fruit, grain, and/or milk options to pick from when selecting their meal.
 - Choices can be offered whether implementing OVS or not implementing OVS.
- As long as the student has the minimum required number of items on their tray including 1/2 cup of fruit or vegetable (or combination of both), staff may not tell students which items they have to take or decline for a reimbursable meal. For instance, students should not be required to take milk.
- Foodservice cannot use OVS to accommodate a student with a special dietary need, such as a food allergy or intolerance. Students with dietary accommodations should have all items/components to decline as they select their meal, just as their fellow students.
- OVS does not affect the meal's unit price established by the School Food Authority. Students who take 3, 4, or 5 food components for lunch or 3 or more food items for breakfast pay the same price.



- Students and their parents need to be aware of what is included in school meals.
 - It is important for parent/guardians to be aware of meals, so they can reinforce making nutritious selections for school meals.
 - Students must know how to select a reimbursable meal.
- Schools should have signage and menus that provide information about how to make a reimbursable meal that is clear and easy to understand for the grade level(s) being served.
- Schools must conduct training for cashiers and serving line staff.
 - This ensures that staff are adequately equipped with the knowledge to assist students with selecting the required components/items in the quantities needed to make reimbursable lunches and breakfasts.
- It is at the menu planner's discretion to determine how much variety is offered and how much a student may select.
 - Menu planners have flexibility to offer more than the minimum requirement if they wish to do so, as long as the dietary specifications are not exceeded.
 - For example, the menu planner could offer four 1/2 cup servings of fruit and allow the student to select 3 or even 4 servings, totaling more than the minimum required offering.

