

## Seven-day Week Lunch Menu Planning Checklist for Grades 6-8

This checklist assists schools with planning meals to meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) meal pattern requirements for the [National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\)](#). Check (☑) “yes” or “no” to indicate if the weekly lunch menu complies with each requirement. For detailed information on the NSLP meal patterns, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage and see the CSDE’s guide, *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

Lunch	Yes	No <sup>1</sup>
Each lunch includes all five components: meat/meat alternates, grains, fruits, vegetables, and milk.		
Milk	Yes	No <sup>1</sup>
The weekly lunch menu includes at least 1 cup of milk		
All milk offered is either unflavored or flavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free. Whole and reduced fat (2%) milk are not served		
At least two different varieties of milk are offered. If flavored milk is offered, unflavored milk is also offered.		
Fruits Component	Yes	No <sup>1</sup>
Each lunch includes at least ½ cup of fruit. <sup>2</sup>		
The weekly lunch menu includes at least 3 ½ cups of fruit. <sup>2</sup>		
If served, 100% fruit juice does not exceed half of the weekly fruits component, i.e., no more than 1 ¾ cups. <b>Note:</b> Indicate “NA” (not applicable) if fruit juice is not served.		
Dried fruit credits as twice the amount served, i.e., ¼ cup of raisins credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.		
Vegetables Component	Yes	No <sup>1</sup>
Each meal includes at least ¾ cup of vegetables. <sup>2</sup>		
The weekly lunch menu includes at least 5 ¼ cups of vegetables. <sup>2</sup>		
The weekly lunch menu meets all vegetable subgroups (5 ¼ cups total):		
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Dark Green:</b> ½ cup dark offered weekly <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Red/Orange:</b> ¾ cup offered weekly <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Beans and Peas (Legumes):</b> ½ cup offered weekly <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Starchy:</b> ½ cup offered weekly <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other:</b> ½ cup offered weekly (or dark green, red/orange, beans/peas, or starchy) <input type="checkbox"/> 2 ½ cup of additional vegetables offered weekly to reach 5 ¼ cups total (choose from any of the five vegetable subgroups)		
If served, 100% vegetable juice does not exceed half of the weekly vegetables component, i.e., no more than 2 ⅝ cups. <b>Note:</b> Indicate “NA” (not applicable) if vegetable juice is not served.		
Raw leafy greens credit as half of the amount served, i.e., 1 cup of lettuce or spinach as ½ cup of the vegetables component.		

Grains Component	Yes	No <sup>1</sup>
Each lunch includes at least 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq) of grains.		
The weekly lunch menu includes 11-14 oz eq of grains. <sup>2</sup>		
All grains are whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched. For more information, see <i>Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP</i> and <i>Crediting Enriched Grains in the NSLP and SBP</i> ,		
At least half of all grains offered are WGR.		
Grain-based desserts are limited to no more than 2 oz eq per week.		
Meat/Meat Alternates (MMA) Component	Yes	No <sup>1</sup>
Each lunch includes at least 1 oz eq of MMA.		
The weekly lunch menu includes 12.5-14 oz eq of MMA. <sup>2</sup>		
Offer versus Serve (OVS)	Yes	No <sup>1</sup>
Students are required to select at least ½ cup of fruit or vegetable for a reimbursable meal.		
In addition to at least ½ cup of fruit or vegetable, students must to select the full portion of at least two other components for a reimbursable meal.		
Dietary Specifications (Nutrient Standards) for Weekly Menus <sup>3</sup> (Indicate “unknown” if you do not conduct your own nutrient analysis.)	Yes	No <sup>1</sup>
Calories are within the allowable range of 600-700 calories.		
Saturated fat is less than 10% of total calories.		
Sodium does not exceed 1,360 milligrams. <i>This first sodium target applies through June 30, 2024.</i>		
All nutrition labels and manufacturer specifications indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving.		

<sup>1</sup> If “no” is checked for any of the statements above, the menu does not comply with the meal pattern requirements. Check the menu and revise accordingly.

<sup>2</sup> Larger amounts of milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and meat/meat alternates may be served only if meals do not exceed the weekly limit for calories, saturated fat, and sodium.

<sup>3</sup> Schools are not required to conduct a nutrient analysis of menus. The CSDE will conduct a nutrient analysis as part of the Administrative Review of Child Nutrition Programs.

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### Menu Planning Resources

Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning-Guide-for-School-Meals>

Menu Planning Resources for School Meals: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/MealPattern/MenuPlanResourcesSchools.pdf>

Offer versus Serve for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Offer-versus-Serve-for-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs: <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Program-Guidance-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Vegetable Subgroups in the NSLP: <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/VegSubgroup.pdf>



For more information, review the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals* and visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpages, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/MealPattern/NSLPmenuchecklist7day\\_grades6-8.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/MealPattern/NSLPmenuchecklist7day_grades6-8.pdf).

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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