



Meal Program

2024-2025

The School Meal Program plays a vital role in supporting children’s health and academic achievement given that proper nutrition is linked to increased cognitive function, increased attention span, and improved achievement scores. Research shows that providing food services during the school day leads to several important outcomes such as improving student health, raising student achievement, and combating food insecurity.

Recognizing these connections, Altus Schools have developed a meal program that abides by the State Meal Mandate for Non-classroom Based Charter Schools in accordance with the California Department of Education’s Universal Meals Program implementation guidelines and California Education Code (EC) Section 49501.5, which requires charter schools serving grades transitional kindergarten through 12 (TK–12) to provide free or reduced breakfast and lunch to students who request a meal every school day. Per Ed Code Section 49501.5:

“(a) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, commencing with the 2022–23 school year all of the following shall apply:

(1) (A) A school district, county superintendent of schools, or charter school maintaining kindergarten or any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, shall make available a nutritionally adequate breakfast and a nutritionally adequate lunch free of charge and with adequate time to eat, as determined by that school district, county superintendent of schools, or charter school in consideration of the recommendations provided by the department pursuant to subdivision (e), during each school day to any pupil who requests a meal without consideration of the pupil’s eligibility for a federally funded free or reduced-price meal, except as described in clauses (i) and (ii) of subparagraph (B), with a maximum of one free breakfast meal and one free lunch meal, except for family daycare homes that shall be reimbursed for 75 percent of the meals served. The meals made available under this paragraph shall be nutritionally adequate meals that qualify for federal reimbursement. Participating school districts, county superintendents of schools, and

charter schools shall comply with federal regulations for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, which includes established mealtimes."

Further, charter schools offering non-classroom-based instruction must offer a nutritionally adequate breakfast and lunch for eligible pupils on any school day that the pupil is scheduled for educational activities. Per Ed Code Section 49501.5:

"(f) Notwithstanding subdivision (a), a school district, county office of education, or charter school that offers independent study, pursuant to Article 5.5 (commencing with Section 51744) of Chapter 5 of Part 28, shall meet the requirements of this section for any pupil on any school day that the pupil is scheduled for educational activities, as defined in Section 49010, lasting two or more hours, at a school site, resource center, meeting space, or other satellite facility. Pupils who are present during established meal times shall have a nutritionally adequate breakfast and nutritionally adequate lunch made available."

While the State Meal Mandate does not apply to remote learning, students who are participating in virtual learning and are on campus for any period of time during a school day are also eligible to receive a meal. The Altus Schools meal program serves all students a free and nutritionally adequate meal each school day regardless of the time they spend at the school site.

Guidelines and Requirements

Each school provided **breakfast** meal must include a serving combination of the following:

- **Fruit** serving to equal the following: One-quarter cup of dried fruit equivalent to ½ cup raw fruit, or 1 cup of fruit in a container, or ½ cup of cooked vegetable, or 1 cup of a raw vegetable.
- **Juice or Milk:** All juice must be 100% full-strength. Milk must be 1% or less.
- **Whole Grains:** 1 oz serving- All grains must be whole grain rich.

In addition to these breakfast options, each school provided **lunch** provides meat and protein options that are adequate for all grade levels in accordance to the Lunch Meal Pattern (www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/newfbmplunch.asp).

- **Meat/Meat Alternative:** 1-2oz per day offered as meat sticks, chicken salad, trail mix, and protein bars.

Additional Guidelines

- Foods containing caffeine are not allowed in middle schools or high schools.
- At **least two** milk choices must be offered that contain vitamins A and D at levels specified by the Food and Drug Administration. All milk must be fat-free or low-fat.

Items Available on a Regular Basis

Milk/Juice

- ❖ 1% Horizon Milk - White
- ❖ Horizon Low Fat Vanilla/Chocolate Milk
- ❖ Ripple Dairy Free White Milk
- ❖ Capri Sun 100% Fruit Juice

Fruit and Vegetable Items (All Vegan, GF, and Nut Free)

- ❖ Mamma Chai Fruit Pouch- Blueberry Acai
- ❖ That's It 100% Fruit Bar
- ❖ Dole Mixed Fruit Cups
- ❖ Pure Fruit Organic Layered Fruit Bar
- ❖ Stretch Island Pure Fruit Strips
- ❖ GoGo SqueeZ Apple and Banana Fruit Pouch
- ❖ Brothers Apple Fruit Crisps
- ❖ Lightly Salted Plantain Chips

Whole Grains and Proteins

- ❖ KIND Healthy Whole Grains Breakfast Protein Bar- Blueberry Almond, Banana Dark Chocolate, Dark Chocolate, Honey Oats
- ❖ Skinny Pop Original Popped Popcorn

- ❖ Cereal: Corn Pops, Frosted Mini Wheats, Honey Bunches of Oats

Meat/Meat Alternatives

- ❖ Beef Sticks 1 oz
- ❖ Nut Harvest, Trail Mix 2.25 oz bags
- ❖ Bumble Bee Chicken Salad Packs 2.9 oz with Crackers
- ❖ Organic Pumpkin Seed 1 oz Snack Packs

Additional Snack Items

- ❖ Garden Veggie Straws
- ❖ Pepperidge Farms Whole Grain Goldfish

How Students Obtain the Meals

- One teacher from each resource center is responsible for monitoring the supply and demand of the food items and placing orders to restock.
- Students are allowed items from each labeled shelf of the Meal Cart that is located in the resource center's designated eating area.
- Unlimited water is available.
- Students are allowed to eat in a designated area at any time during their daily visit to the resource center.
- Students obtain information about what constitutes a nutritiously adequate meal through signage at the resource center, school communications, and school staff. Instructional and support staff are informed on guidelines throughout the school year through various methods, including instructional meetings, resource center visits, and the Wave.
- Students can take home food items when requested.

Additional Food Resources

CalFresh is also known as the federal [**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)**](#). It is a program for low-income families and individuals that meet certain income guidelines. CalFresh benefits help supplement a food budget and allow families and individuals to buy nutritious food.

CalFresh benefits are accessed by using an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card. An EBT card is used the same way as a debit or ATM card. Eligibility and the amount of CalFresh benefits issued depend on household size, income, and certain living expenses.

For more information about CalFresh and application instructions, visit **BenefitsCal** at <https://benefitscal.com/> or the following county agencies:

- San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency:
https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/hhsa/programs/ssp/food_stamps.html
- San Bernardino County Transitional Assistance Department:
<https://wp.sbcounty.gov/tad/programs/calfresh/>
- Riverside County Department of Public Social Services:
<https://rivcodpss.org/apply-benefits>

Immediate Food Need

Families may be eligible to receive CalFresh within three days if they qualify for CalFresh Expedited Services. Families can also get food assistance through various community organizations throughout San Diego.

Families may also **call 2-1-1** or visit <https://www.211.org/> for resources in their local community, across all counties in California.

For a quick search of other food resources visit:

- <http://sandiegofoodbank.org/get-help/need-food-zip-code-search/>
- <https://feedingsandiego.org/get-help/>