

July 25, 2022

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We are thrilled to be serving your child for the 2022-2023 school year! To kick off the new 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'll 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.

Free and Reduced-Price Meals

Thanks to nationwide waivers for federally funded meal programs, school meals were free to all students through the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. **At this time, these waivers have expired, so schools must return to charging for breakfast and lunch.**

Free or reduced-price meals are only available to students who qualify for these benefits, but all students, regardless of family situations are encouraged to dine in the cafeteria together. For the 2022-23 school year, breakfast will cost \$1.95 and lunch will cost \$2.95 for Elementary Schools, \$3.00-\$4.00 for Secondary Schools.

Our goal is to continue to support all students and families by ensuring those 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 download this application online at www.stcharlessd.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.

We have a computerized debit system called Tyler SIS. All ending account balances (positive and negative) remain in the accounts of our system. All students and staff have an 8 digit pin number to enter at the cash register at each school or we may use a bar code scanner and card or class roster. Schools may vary. Any new students or adults will be given a PIN number at registration, or may call the food service department for their pin number. This system allows you to pay in advance for ala carte foods (milk, juice, chips etc.). A list of student names and PIN numbers along with account balances will be available at the orientations held at each school for all students in PK-12th grades. To prevent fraudulent use of student accounts, we have a picture of each student currently in the system. We recommend that all students and adults prepay money on their account for speed of service; of course you will still be able to pay

cash on a daily basis. Please go to: <https://sis.stcharlessd.org/STC/Parent> to make payments on line and check the current account balance from August to June.

Food Allergies and Special Dietary Needs

We recognize the critical importance of our approach to supporting students and families who manage food allergy issues every day and 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 food service professionals in the school's/district's food allergy and medical conditions protocol.

If you would like your child to receive meal accommodations for food allergies or a medical condition impacting the diet, please ensure that you submit the required documentation to your child's school and that you receive confirmation from Shirley Derby that documentation has been received and a modification plan is in place.

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 for 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.
- **Student Choice:** Giving middle and high school students a voice in deciding what food concepts are featured and new menu items that will be available, Student Choice brings the latest food trends to school menus.

Inviting Environments & Happy Cafeterias

Students need a place to eat where they can connect with others, recharge, and enjoy a sense of happiness, especially following a year where kids weren't able to always sit and enjoy a meal with their classmates.

Menus, and 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://stcharles.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 services team with perks including, family friendly schedules, no night or weekend work, hiring incentives, and more. For more information, call Shirley Derby at 636-443-4016.

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 to your children in the year ahead.

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,
Shirley Derby, FMP
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