

School Nutrition Program At-A-Glance

Topic: Offer versus Serve

Overview

Offer Versus Serve (OVS) is a provision in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program that allows students to decline some of the food offered. The goals of OVS are to reduce food waste in the school meals programs while permitting students to decline foods they do not intend to eat.

OVS General Requirements:

- ✓ Required at lunch for grades 9-12.
- ✓ Optional at lunch for grades K-8.
- ✓ Optional for grades K-12 for breakfast.
- ✓ Optional for lunches served under the Seamless Summer Option (SSO).
- ✓ Offer versus serve is not allowable for the Afterschool Snack Service.
- ✓ Offer versus serve is not allowable for non-comingled preschool students.
- ✓ Signage explaining what constitutes a reimbursable meal, including the requirement to select at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fruit or vegetables, must be posted at or close to the beginning of the service line.
- ✓ Staff responsible for identifying a reimbursable meal at the point of service must be trained and be able to identify what constitutes a reimbursable meal.

OVS Requirements for Breakfast and Lunch		
Requirements	Breakfast	Lunch
What schools must offer	At least four food items from three meal components (grain/meat/meat alternate, fruit, fluid milk)	All five meal components (grain, meat/meat alternate, fruit, vegetable, fluid milk)
Daily minimums to offer	K-12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 oz eq grain/meat/meat alternate • 1 cup fruit (or vegetable) • 1 cup milk 	K-8 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 oz eq grain • 1 oz eq meat/meat alternate • $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fruit • $\frac{3}{4}$ cup vegetable • 1 cup fluid milk 9-12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 oz eq grain • 2 oz eq meat/meat alternate • 1 cup fruit • 1 cup vegetable • 1 cup fluid milk

What students must select	At least three food items, one of which is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fruit/vegetable.	At least three different meal components, one of which is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fruit/vegetable.
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Exceptions:

- An OVS exception may be granted when there are logistical limitations, such as facility or space restrictions, or situations where students are unable to select from food offered.
- OVS signage is not required for field trips or breakfast in the classroom; however, other methods should be used to inform students of their choices.

Helpful Resources:[Offer versus Serve Manual](#)[Offer versus Serve Lunch Tip Sheet \[Spanish Version\]](#)[Offer versus Serve Breakfast Tip Sheet \[Spanish Version\]](#)[Offer versus Serve Signage \[Spanish Versions\]](#)[ODE Offer versus Serve Training](#)**Regulatory Reference:**[7 CFR 210.10\(e\)](#)[7 CFR 220.8\(e\)](#)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Acronym Reference and Definitions

NSLP	National School Lunch Program
SBP	School Breakfast Program
CFR	Codified Federal Regulation
OVS	Offer versus Serve