

## CRITERIA AND PROCEDURE

**BROAD SUBJECT: MEAL SERVICES**

**NO: MS-03-04**

**TITLE: Offer Versus Serve**

**EFFECTIVE DATE:  
August 21, 2009**

### PURPOSE OF THIS CRITERIA/PROCEDURE –

This Criteria and Procedure provides additional information on the implementation of Offer Versus Serve (OVS).

### KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS –

**Alternate Menu Planning Approach:** A modification of one of the established menu planning approaches or a new written approach that describes how the guidelines provided in 7 CFR 210.10 (l)(4) will be met. An alternate menu planning approach developed by a school food authority must have prior state agency approval. If it is developed by the state agency, it must have approval from USDA, Food and Nutrition Service unless it meets the criteria provided in 7 CFR 210.10 (l)(3)(iii).

**Elementary Students:** As defined by federal regulations, are in grades K - 8.

**Entrée:** A combination of foods or a single food item that is offered as the main course in the Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (NSMP) option.

**Food-based Menu Planning/Enhanced Food-based Menu Planning:** Schools plan the menus by following a meal pattern that requires specific food group components in specific amounts for students of specific age/grade groupings. The meal pattern could be either the traditional meal pattern or the enhanced food-based meal pattern.

**Food Component:** One of the four food categories that comprise reimbursable meals planned under a food-based menu planning approach. The food components are:

1. Meat/meat alternate
2. Grains/breads
3. Vegetables/fruits
4. Milk

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**Food Item:** A required food offered under a food-based menu planning approach.

At **lunch** the five required food items are: meat/meat alternate; milk; grains/breads; and two servings of vegetables/fruits

At **breakfast**, the four required food items offered in a food-based menu planning approach are: (milk; one serving of juice/fruit/vegetable (full-strength fruit or vegetable juice); and two servings of grains/breads or two servings of meat/meat alternate or one serving of grains/breads and one serving of meat/meat alternate.

**Full Portions:** Portion sizes planned by the menu planner to meet the meal pattern requirements and/or nutrient standards. For example, a 1.8 oz. roll would meet 2 full portions of bread/bread alternate as planned by the menu planner. If the meal pattern requires  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of fruits and/or vegetables, the menu planner could plan for the students to have  $\frac{3}{8}$  cup serving of two; a  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup serving of one item, such as french fries and a  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of another fruit and/or vegetable. A minimum serving from this Fruit and Vegetable (F/V) group is  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup serving and the second F/V must be  $\frac{5}{8}$  cup serving.

**In-School Suspension (ISS):** An action that temporarily denies a student the right to attend scheduled classes and requires attendance in a special behavior management program held in the school.

**Menu Item:** Under NSMP or Assisted Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (ANSMP), any single food or combination of foods is considered to be a menu item. All menu items or foods offered as part of the reimbursable meal contribute toward meeting the nutrition standards, except for those foods that are considered as foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNV), unless the FMNV is offered as part of a menu item in a reimbursable meal.

**Menu Planning Option:** There are five USDA-approved menu planning options. These options are: traditional food-based, enhanced food-based, NSMP, ANSMP, and alternate menu planning.

**NSMP/ANSMP:** Schools plan menus by using USDA-approved computer software. The nutrient content for all menu items and food offered over a school week is analyzed prior to the menus being served to ensure that they meet specific calorie, calories from fat, and nutrient levels. The SFA/school can choose to conduct the analysis based on either weighted or simple averages.

**Offer Versus Serve (OVS):** A provision available for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs that, when approved, allows students to refuse one or two food or menu items, depending upon the type of menu planning option being used and the program involved.

**Serving:** The minimum quantity of a food item that must be offered to meet program requirements for specified age/grade groups. When a food-based menu planning option is used, serving sizes must be consistent with the portions listed in USDA's *A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals*, in order for the meal to be reimbursable.

## **CRITERIA AND/OR PROCEDURES -**

1. OVS is required for senior high schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). It is optional for all grade levels for the School Breakfast Program. The status of OVS implementation must be declared annually for each school and for each program in the School Approval Module (SAM) on the School Nutrition Online (SNO) Reporting System.
2. Decisions about how the OVS provision will be implemented in schools are left to the discretion of local School Food Authorities (SFAs). SFAs must decide whether students may decline one or two food items. If an SFA desires to allow elementary students to participate in the offer versus serve provision, it must obtain permission from the superintendent or designee to allow students of this young age to decline food items.
3. For a lunch to be reimbursable, a senior high student must take full portions of no fewer than three of the five food items being offered, if the SFA is on a food-based menu planning option. For breakfast to be reimbursable, if OVS is being implemented, the student may refuse only one food item from any component. The price of the reimbursable meal does not change if the student refuses one menu item or two food items, in accordance with OVS guidance.
4. For lunches being planned by using the NSMP option, a minimum of three menu items is required (an entrée, side dish and fluid milk). Students must always take the entrée and must have at least two menu items on their tray. If more than three menu items are offered as a meal unit, they may never decline more than two menu items. For breakfasts, a minimum of three menu items are required (two side items and fluid milk). If OVS is approved, students may decline any one of the menu items being offered at breakfast.
5. For schools using ANSMP, another entity completes the menu planning and analysis. Planned menus must incorporate local food preferences and accommodate local food service operations. This analysis serves as documentation that the meals being served are reimbursable. If OVS is implemented, the same rules apply as indicated for the NSMP option.

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6. In-school suspension and other alternative centers below the senior high school level are discouraged from implementing OVS if the delivery system makes it unmanageable. Meals must not be denied or withheld, as a disciplinary measure.
7. OVS does not apply to the after school supplement of the NSLP because only two components are required to be served.
8. The SFA should educate teachers, administrators and students about the number of items that can be selected for a reimbursable meal and the appropriate portion sizes in order to improve customer satisfaction.
9. State Board of Education Rule 160-5-6-.01 states that a choice of menus or items within food selections is required in all schools where students may refuse food items offered. In order to comply with this rule, a choice of menus, such as a salad plate or a sack lunch, or a choice of items within each menu or food item shall be offered to all students who are able to refuse food items.

For example, students may be offered several choices of entrees, such as a hamburger with bun, pizza, or chef salad. Here, one menu item is offered --- the entrée --- but the student has three choices.

10. SFAs wishing to implement Offer Versus Serve when they are offering a prepackaged meal must use creative strategies to do so. For example, they might allow students to go through the cafeteria line before they leave for a field trip and fill their own lunch bags with items of their choosing.

Sack lunches might be packed with two or three food components, and arrangements can be made to allow the students to choose other food components that were not included in the sack from a wide variety of milks, juices and/or fruits.

## **AUTHORITY – FEDERAL**

7 CFR Parts 210.10(e), 210.10(h)(2)(ii), 210.10(k)(6), 220.8(g)(4), 210.10(i)(2)(ii),  
220.8(e)(2)(ii), 210.2(w-1), 210.10(i)(5), 210.10(j)(1), 220.8(e)(2)(iii), 220.8(j)(1), 220.8(e)(f)(l),  
220.8(g)(4), 210.10(k)(6), and 210.10(n).

FNS Instruction 791-1, Rev. 1, Prohibition Against Denying Meals and Milk to Children as a  
Disciplinary Action

USDA Reviewer's Guide to SMI February 2006

*USDA Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals*

USDA Nutrient Analysis Protocols

SMI Frequently Asked Questions, January 2006

210:10-18: Questions on the Schools Meals Initiative (SMI) for Healthy Children

Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs

USDA, Offer versus Serve kit, 2004

## **AUTHORITY – STATE**

Georgia State Board of Education Rule 160-5-6.01