July 2024

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We can't wait to welcome students back to the cafeteria for the 2024-25 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, including information on meal pricing, steps to apply for free and reduced-price meals, how we manage food allergies and the documentation needed, and 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. This year we're serving up:

- Global Eats- Starting at MS-HS in November with China, India, India, Mexico &
- Discovery Kitchen alternated schools - Monthly
- Apple Crunch Day in October

The value of school lunch is top of mind as families continue to experience inflation and growing food costs at home. In addition to giving kids the chance to try new foods and cut back on food waste, school lunch provides students with healthy, balanced, and safe meals at an affordable price, while saving families time and stress.

Community Eligibility Provision- All students receive Free Meals
For the upcoming 2024-25 school year, Beech Grove City Schools have been approved for **CEP.** This means students will have the opportunity to enjoy breakfast, lunch, supper & after-school snacks at no cost throughout the academic year. It is important to note that families should still complete **Income Based Application**, which helps ensure ongoing state funding and can qualify your child's school or community for other special programs like title 1 or other school programs**.** Parents or guardians can submit income-based application online at **[insert website address]**. Please contact _____ for more information about the income base application.

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 Beech Grove City Schools 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 **https://bgcs.k12.in.us/food-health-service/** and that you receive confirmation from **Lauren Fields – Lfileds@bgcs.k12.in.us** that documentation has been received and a modification plan is in place.

To modify the school meal, we must have a written Medical Statement on file signed by a licensed medical provider (physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner). The statement must identify the following:

- Information about the child's impairment that is sufficient for understanding how it restricts the child's diet,
- An explanation of what must be done to accommodate the child's disability, and
- If appropriate, the food(s) to be omitted, texture modifications, and recommended substitutions.

For any children who are currently receiving meal accommodations, please contact Resident Dietitian **Lauren Fields – Lfileds@bgcs.k12.in.us** to review the meal accommodation plan, which may require additions or amendments based on the ongoing supply chain issues.

As part of our protocol, café managers review food labels for foods used to produce special meals daily. We may encounter situations where product substitutions are made that contain different allergens or have a different nutritional profile than our usual menu items. As a result, we may need to provide a meal that is different than previously identified for students with special dietary needs to ensure that the meal served to them remains in adherence to their needs as outlined in their medical forms.

While we have posted signs in the cafeteria encouraging students with food allergies or other dietary concerns to speak up, we encourage you to remind your child to be sure to check with the cafeteria manager regarding product substitutions that may not be reflected in the posted menu. We will make every attempt to update Nutrislice in real-time, but please do not solely rely on nutrition or allergen information on Nutrislice to accommodate allergies or medical conditions in the event of last-minute menu changes.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding your student's allergies or dietary needs, please don't hesitate to reach out to **Lauren Fields – Lfileds@bgcs.k12.in.us**.
We are committed to providing safe meals for all students.

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:

- **Global Eats**: Highlighting the unique ingredients and authentic flavors from cuisines around the world, Global Eats brings a world of flavors to the cafeteria. Our newest signature program takes students on a food exploration that celebrates cultural heritages, traveling through China, India, Italy, Mexico, Korea, and the Caribbean.
- **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 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 **bgcs.nutrislice.com/menu**.

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. Throughout the school year, these heroes of the cafeteria are dedicated to making mealtime a bright spot in a student's day, ensuring kids throughout the Beech Grove community are served nourishing meals.

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, email **Clara Lopez – cllopez@bgcs.k12.in.us.**

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,
Clara Lopez
Director of Dining Services
Chartwells K12- Beech Grove City Schools