

On Friday September 4, 2020 the Diocese of Owensboro School Food Services, was approved by the Kentucky Dept. of Education, to begin serving free meals for both breakfast and lunch through the Summer Meal Program. Free meals will begin on Tuesday September 8th and continue through the end of 2020, or until available funding runs out.

The Diocese of Owensboro SFS has participated in the summer meal program for several years. In March, when schools were shut down due to Covid-19, we immediately opened five of our school sites to provide free meals for all children 18 years and younger. Once school resumed in person instruction days in late August, we were required to switch over to the National School Breakfast & Lunch Program and charge students for their meals.

The announcement came from USDA on August 31, 2020 allowing summer meal program operators to continue serving free meals to all children into the fall months. This unprecedented move will help ensure – no matter what the situation is on–the-ground children have access to nutritious food as the country recovers from the Covid-19 pandemic. USDA has been and continues to be committed to using the congressionally appropriated funding that has been made available.

Students will still be able to purchase a la carte items with the positive funds in their accounts. Any positive account balance will remain in the student's accounts for when we switch back to the National School Breakfast & Lunch Program.

We encourage all students to participate in the free meals for both breakfast and lunch. Every precaution is being taken by our cafeteria staff to ensure all students are served a nutritious, hot meal. Cafeteria managers are screening their delivery drivers and employees upon arrival by taking temperatures and each employee is required to fill out a health screening form daily. The foodservice staff wears masks and gloves every day along with handwashing and sanitizing tables and equipment multiple times a day. All components for the meal service are handed to the student by the foodservice staff to prevent handling of food and supplies by the students.

For the students who are learning from home, they may have their meals picked up and brought home to them. For families with younger children at home, they also qualify for a free meal. The Summer Meal Program is open for all children 18 years old and younger. We do ask if you plan on picking up meals for students learning from home that you call your school cafeteria manager and let them know so enough meals can be prepared each day.

The Diocese of Owensboro greatly appreciates USDA addressing the critical challenges shared by our employees serving students on the frontlines and by allowing our school nutrition professionals to focus on nourishing hungry children for success, rather than scrambling to process paperwork and verify eligibility in the midst of a pandemic.

Thank You,

Sonya Evans
Director of Food Services