

Offer vs. Serve

“2 Decline or not to decline”

I'm sure at some dinner time conversation, the topic of “declines” has come up, and so I thought I would go over the details of offer vs. serve again.

- ✚ St. Matthew Board of Education passed the “offer vs. serve” option for the hot lunch program in 1995.

Offer vs. Serve is a provision that allows students to decline either 1 or 2 of the menu items in our school lunch (and 1 item in a school breakfast) that they do not intend to eat. As a result of this we can reduce the food waste and at the same time allow students to select only the foods they wish to eat.

Even our youngest students are becoming very aware of making good choices on their daily food consumption. Studies have shown children are more likely to eat --- and gain the most nutrition from---the foods *they* choose. Students can always select all the foods offered as part of the menu---for the same price as fewer foods---and are encouraged to do so. One benefit the lunch program provides to the student is the ability to taste test some food just to see if they like it or try it again to see if their taste buds have changed.

The lunch room monitors (teachers and Mr. Wolf) remind the children to eat (instead of talk) or simply “try” the food items they have chosen, but in no way force any student to eat or even try something against their will. (That has been a long standing urban legend).

Planning the school lunch meal

The National School lunch program provides 1/3 of the Recommended Dietary Allowances for lunch (and ¼ for breakfast) of necessary nutrients. At St. Matthew's our program is based on nutritional analysis. That means we meet the established standards for calories, protein, calcium, iron, Vitamins A and C, fiber and make certain our total fat is less than 30% of total calories, with saturated fat being less than 10%. The guidelines on grains have also changed, and now ½ of all the grains on the menu are a whole grain product. Every month our meals are planned using these guidelines.

Good Choices for the Student

When the students come to lunch they are faced with the decision---what, if any, to decline. Naturally we would like the student to take the entire planned meal; however, with offer vs. serve they must take the entrée (main item) and then choose to decline 1 or 2 sides, depending on how many sides are offered. This is where reviewing the menu each month with your child(ren) would provide the opportunity to discuss making good choices and/or trying new foods. We will not allow any seconds with food remaining on the lunch tray. We do have to charge for a second main dish or milk, but do not charge for any second on fruits or vegetables. We also offer a fresh fruit each day to the students in addition to the planned fruit at lunch. We do have desserts a few times a week, but never offer a second. Our alternative choice to the main dish is a peanut butter sandwich using 2 slices of Sara Lee Whole Grain White Bread, and yogurt. The milk we offer is Chocolate Skim, White Skim and 1% white.

Below you will find a sample of Friday's menu. You can get an idea of the lunch options.

Friday Menu	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
E= Shrimp Fries Corn Cottage cheese Pine apple Roll Milk	Student chooses all of the items on the menu:☺	Shrimp Fries Pineapple Roll Milk Declined Corn Cottage Cheese	Peanut Butter/Yogurt Fries Pineapple Corn Milk Declined Cottage Cheese Roll	Peanut Butter/yogurt Fries Corn Cottage Cheese Pineapple Milk Declined Roll
E= Entrée EA= Entrée Alternative --- Peanut Butter Sandwich Jelly is available				

If you ever have any questions, please feel free to call me. Jane @ 362-3021