

Dear Parent or Guardian,

August 2025



The East Longmeadow School Food and Nutrition Services Program welcomes your input and support in order to guarantee the wide variety of nutritious meals offered to our students.

NUTRITION:

We are excited about all our continued changes and selections for both school breakfast and lunch. Our goal is to make sure your children have a variety of healthy choices every day. We are constantly revising our recipes in an effort to reduce the amount of fat, sodium and sugar in the meals that are served to our students. School meals are a convenient option for busy families and offers all the dietary requirements for your children. The menus are based on the meal pattern required by the USDA, and are in line with the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Our goals include increasing fruits, vegetables and whole grains, setting calorie ranges for each age/grade group, and developing and teaching healthy eating habits.

We do offer ala carte items at lunch. Items are individually priced. Cartons of milk cost 55 cents by itself when not opting for the complete lunch. All these products meet or exceed the very latest nutrition regulations.



LUNCH PRICES FOR 2025-2026:

FREE MEALS FOR ALL! East Longmeadow Public School Food Service is providing a FREE meal to all students with the continued implementation of the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for our School District. Your student will be offered one NO CHARGE breakfast and one NO CHARGE lunch each day at their school. Any snack, ala carte item, or second meal* is extra and will be charged to your student's lunch account.

payschoolscentral.com:

Pay Schools Central is an online VIEW and pay option for families. Initialize your account to see the past 30 days of transactions, set up email reminders, and arrange low balance alerts ~ all at no cost. A downloadable digital school lunch ID is available once you are registered for PaySchoolsCentral. This digital ID can be used through a smartphone and scanned at the school cafeteria register when checking out. Paying online is an option but fees will apply. Please refer to our school lunch website at www.eastlongmeadowma.gov for all the detailed information about payschoolscentral.com. Checks and cash are still always accepted directly at each school (in a clearly labeled envelope to school lunch with student's name) or mailed to the Food Service Office at 180 Maple Street, East Longmeadow, MA 01028.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

It is important to understand that our total income is obtained from Federal and State reimbursement along with the revenue from ala carte items and second meal purchases. No monies are appropriated to the Lunch Program from the School Department budget. The town does not pay for labor, equipment, repairs, supplies, etc. We do not receive free food. When USDA foods are available, we can purchase them at a reduced cost and in limited quantity. This school year we have grant funds through USDA to procure local, unprocessed foods with Massachusetts Farm to School Food Hubs.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS:

Depending on your financial situation, your child (ren) may qualify for free or reduced price meals. There are new income guidelines each year. Once we are notified by the state, a letter of Direct Certification will be sent to the home address. There are other benefits/entitlements that work in conjunction with this qualifying eligibility. All information remains confidential as required by law. Students are in no way identified as participating in the program, unless they themselves tell their friends.

- ▶ If you have already received a letter in the mail regarding "Notice of Direct Certification 2025-2026" from us, we ask that you complete and forward the Sharing of Information Form. This will remain on file for the current school year in order to receive potential entitlements with any of the other school programs.
- ▶ If you have not received a Notice of Direct Certification for this current school year and are in need of financial assistance, please contact either the Food Service Office or the District School Office (413-525-5450 x7900) for information at any time during the school year.

Please call me at 525-5450 (select "7980" for Food Services) if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions.

Lori Pahl, Director of Food Services