

K-8 Schools - Offer vs Serve (OVS)

Offer versus Serve (OVS) is an option in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and National School Lunch Program (NSLP) that allows students to decline some of the food offered. The goal of OVS is to reduce food waste in the school meal programs by allowing students to decline foods they do not intend to eat.

OVS at Breakfast

At breakfast, schools must offer students food “items” from all three of the required component groups, in at least the minimum required amounts. The component groups for breakfast are:

- Grains (with optional Meats/Meat alternates allowed);
- Fruit/Vegetable; AND
- Milk

Under OVS, a student must be offered at least four food “items” from the component groups listed above. Typically one grain, and one milk, along with multiple fruit options are offered each day.

The student must select at least three food “items”, one of which must be at least one ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.

OVS at Lunch

At lunch, schools must offer students foods from all five of the required component groups, in at least the minimum required amounts. The components groups for lunch are:

- Meats/Meat Alternates;
- Grains;
- Fruits;
- Vegetables; AND
- Milk.

Under OVS, a student must take foods from at least three component groups, in the required serving sizes. One of those component group selection must be at least one ½ cup of either a fruit or vegetable.