

Bennington Elementary School
Food Service Policy Statement
 2020 - 2021 School Year

Bennington Elementary School's School Lunch Provider

The Abbey Group is an award winning Food Service Management Company with a passion for high quality ingredients, locally sourced products, sustainable food service practices and exceptional customer service. The Abbey Group provides a wide variety of menu choices every day to its client schools throughout New England and New York. For more information about our company and services please visit our website, www.abbeygroup.net.

Student Accounts, Payment and Pricing

The Food Service program uses the Meals Plus computer point of sale system to track student account transactions. Parents may view student purchase history and receive low balance notifications free of charge. Meals Plus also allows users to deposit money or make payments on account for a nominal fee. Please visit our website at www.abbeygroup.net for more information. Student accounts must maintain a positive balance. We recommend using the Meals Plus on-line payment feature to deposit funds or send a check directly to the cafeteria made payable to **Bennington Elementary School Hot Lunch Program** the first of the week. Please write your child(ren)'s name and/or ID number clearly. Cards for K-2 students with the student's school food service ID number will be issued the first week of school. This number will be used to track the student's account transactions throughout the year. A detailed report may be requested at anytime. *Snack beverages, additional entrées or other a la carte purchases may be purchased on accounts in good standing.* To **prohibit or limit** a la carte purchases please call the cafeteria or visit our website for the email address at: www.abbeygroup.net. Breakfast and lunch meal menus and prices can be found on our website www.abbeygroup.net and on the school lunch menu sent home each month.

Free and Reduced Priced School Meals Policy

Parents or guardians should review the income eligibility guidelines to see if the student qualifies for free or reduced meal benefits. Applications are available in the information packet sent home at the beginning of the school year or parents may contact the school office. Applications are also available online at <https://education.vermont.gov/sites/aoe/files/documents/edu-nutrition-meal-application-2020-2021.pdf> . Parents or guardians can apply or reapply for free and reduced meal benefits at anytime during the school year when there is a change in family income. **Free and reduced priced school meals information is strictly confidential.**

Child Nutrition Programs Income Eligibility Guidelines School Year 2020 - 2021										
Household Size	Free					Reduced Price				
	Yearly	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly	Yearly	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	16,588	1,383	692	638	319	23,606	1,968	984	908	454
2	22,412	1,868	934	862	431	31,894	2,658	1,329	1,227	614
3	28,236	2,353	1,177	1,086	543	40,182	3,349	1,675	1,546	773
4	34,060	2,839	1,420	1,310	655	48,470	4,040	2,020	1,865	933
5	39,884	3,324	1,662	1,534	767	56,758	4,730	2,365	2,183	1,092
6	45,708	3,809	1,905	1,758	879	65,046	5,421	2,711	2,502	1,251
7	51,532	4,295	2,148	1,982	991	73,334	6,112	3,056	2,821	1,411
8	57,356	4,780	2,390	2,206	1,103	81,622	6,802	3,401	3,140	1,570
For each additional household member, add	5,824	486	243	224	112	8,288	691	346	319	160

Alternate Meal Policy

All accounts are subject to the Account Charge Policy established by your school. Please visit your schools web site to view their current Account Charge Policy. Zero account balance notification letters are sent home weekly. Please remit payment promptly. If you have any questions regarding your child's account please call your school Food Service Director. Their email address and phone number can be located at www.abbeygroup.net/your_school/php

Snack Beverage Policy

All students participating in school snack programs **must** pay for milk or juice regardless of income eligibility. Milk is included in the price of all school meals. Students with free or reduced meal benefits are reminded that milk is only included with a complete meal otherwise a la carte prices apply.

Choice & Variety

The Food Service program offers many breakfast and lunch choices daily. Please visit our website for the daily meal offerings at your school: www.abbeygroup.net. Assorted fresh fruit and vegetables as well as a choice of milk are included with every meal.

Breakfast Program

The Abbey school breakfast program is open to everyone. Studies have shown that eating breakfast can reduce stomach aches, improve alertness, and overall help students be better learners. Our breakfast program offers daily choices such as: yogurt parfait meal, ham and cheese on a whole wheat bagel, sausage & cheese muffin, scrambled eggs and breakfast bun, fruit filled muffins, hot or cold cereal, and other breakfast entrees available on a rotating basis. All breakfast meals include milk and fresh fruit.

Field Trips

The Food Service program loves to make bag lunches for any occasion. Please place your order through the classroom teacher 3 days prior to the trip. The price is the same price as for lunch. The bag lunch contains a healthy sandwich, fresh fruit and vegetables, granola bar, milk or juice. There are classroom incentives available for large orders. Free and reduced lunch prices apply to bag lunches for those who qualify.

Promotions

The Food Service program provides promotional and entertaining events throughout the year such as holiday meals, barbecues, and more. We encourage parents and other family members to join their children and The Abbey Group for these fun filled occasions. All promotions are to encourage healthy eating and involve the community in the National School Lunch Program. The promotions are advertised on the menu with the details posted in the cafeteria.

Nutrition

The Food Service program is actively involved with the Department of Education School Nutrition Programs, School Nutrition Association, New England Dairy Council, and many other organizations to bring healthy, appealing, delicious meals to your school. We incorporate low fat, low sodium cooking techniques and we offer 100% whole grains with all our menu choices. The Abbey encourages healthy eating habits with our "Eat Smart Play Hard" nutrition class. Eat Smart Play Hard is a fun filled presentation designed to teach students about making healthy food choices and being physically active.

Dishing Up Local

The Abbey Group proudly supports Farm to School activities to connect the cafeteria, classroom and the community. Farm to School objectives include improving student nutrition, providing agricultural, health and education opportunities and supporting local and regional farmers. The Abbey Group directs its purchasing efforts to include locally grown produce & locally made products in our menu production. We feature a monthly menu devoted to local ingredients including those grown in school gardens. Please contact us if you would like to participate in a local farm to school initiative.

Student/Adult Account Policy

Philosophy: The goal of The Abbey Food Service Group is to provide delicious, nutritious, high quality meals to all students and staff of every school we represent. All accounts are subject to the Account Charge Policy established by your school. Please visit your schools web site to view their current Account Charge Policy.

1. Written notification, **Zero-Balance Letter**, is sent home with the student when the account balance is less than zero.
2. Phone notification, **Minus-Balance**, is initiated to the parent or guardian, when there is a negative balance equal to or beyond two charged meals.
3. With no response, and within the guidelines of reasonable fiscal restraints, the school and parent or guardian is then notified.

We recommend using the Meals Plus online payment feature: www.k12paymentcenter.com

Closing Statement

If at any time you have any questions or comments, please contact your school and ask for the **Food Service Supervisor**. You may also contact Scott Choiniere, Executive Vice President of Operations at 802-933-4747 or visit our website: www.abbeygroup.net. We value our customers and always appreciate your comments.

USDA Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
2. fax: (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Bennington Elementary School Account Refund Policy

Refund Policy:

For accounts with a positive balance at the end of a school year, one of two things can occur:

- For graduating students, positive balances will be transferred to younger siblings at the parent's request. If there is not another sibling, a positive balance refund request can be made by submitting a request to your student's school administration office. If a request is not made, the balances will remain in the school's hot lunch program.
- For returning students with a positive balance, their balance will be carried over on their account into the new school year.