



School Meal Program (SMP) Information 2025-26:

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Welcome back to another year of learning, growth, and connection. School food continues to be a pillar of support for our students, and the 2024–2025 school year marked several meaningful milestones both locally and nationally. We're proud to share a few highlights:

- The launch of the **National School Food Program**, supporting school meal initiatives across Canada.
- Continued funding through B.C.'s **Feeding Futures** program, delivered by the Ministry of Education and Child Care.
- A successful first year of partnership with **Nourish Cowichan**, which provided daily meals to students in Port Alberni and Ucluelet through local staff.
- A 10% increase in participation: approximately 21% of all students in our district accessed the School Meal Program.
- Major renovations to the **central kitchen at EJ Dunn Elementary**, increasing our capacity to serve a greater variety and volume of meals to Alberni Valley schools.
- Ongoing **community support** from school staff, volunteers, and donors—thank you. Your generosity remains the heart of this work.

We are especially grateful to continue working with **Nourish Cowichan**, whose guiding belief is that when communities come together with love and compassion, incredible things can happen. Their mission ensures every child has the opportunity to learn and thrive with access to nutritious food.

Everyone Belongs at the Table

Pacific Rim School District is committed to ensuring that every student has access to nourishing meals. With support from Feeding Futures and the National School Food Program, we're helping students feel well, learn better, and reduce food insecurity in our communities.

While government funding provides a strong foundation, community donations are essential to bridging the gap and keeping the program running sustainably.

What is the School Meal Program (SMP)?

The SMP ensures students receive a nutritious lunch and snack each school day, starting **September 3, 2025**, and continuing throughout the school year.

Who pays for the School Meal Program?

The School Meal Program is funded by:

1. The Ministry of Education and Childcare's Feeding Futures initiative.
2. The National School Food Program.
3. Donations made to Nourish, which stay local to our district.

What kind of food is served?

Meals are prepared fresh by our team at EJ Dunn Elementary School's kitchen and planned to be nourishing, culturally appropriate, and made with care. We focus on whole foods and minimally processed ingredients, and aim to source locally whenever possible.

As the program grows and evolves, so too will our offerings. With expanded kitchen capacity and input from students, families, and schools, we're working toward more diverse menus.

Snacks Are Always Available

We want every student to feel supported throughout the day. **That's why we make snacks available for anyone who's feeling hungry.** Whether your child is enrolled in the program or not, they are welcome to access snacks—everyone belongs at the table.

How do I enroll my student(s) and contribute to the School Meal Program?

Our School Meal Program operates on the principle that everyone is welcome, and nobody will be turned away, even if they can't contribute. Enrollment helps us plan and order food effectively (continued...).



1. **To enroll**, complete the form at the bottom of this letter and return it to your school. This enrolls your student(s) for the full school year.
There is no obligation to participate, and the program is offered at no cost and without pressure to contribute. If you'd like to opt out, please contact your school secretary.
2. **To contribute**, donations made to Nourish are used to feed students right here in our district. *While the suggested donation is \$100/month per student (about \$5 per school day), any amount helps – especially as food prices continue to rise. Contributions are voluntary and help us serve more students.* Your support helps us keep the program running strong, reduce food insecurity, and ensure that no student goes without a meal.

How Can You Help?

The success of our School Meal Program depends on the support of our community. Here are a few ways you can get involved:

- **Volunteer:** Find out what's needed to volunteer your time to help with meal preparation or distribution. Commitment is flexible, and we are happy to accommodate your schedule.
- **Spread the Word:** Share this vital program with others.
- **Donate:** Every \$1,000 donated feeds one student for a full school year. Tax receipts are available, and 100% of donations go directly toward food for students in our district—helping us offer more meals, more variety, and reduce reliance on public funding.

For more information about Nourish, including how to volunteer or donate, please visit their website at www.nourishcowichan.ca or call 250-735-2399.



Thank you for your continued support and commitment to student well-being.

Kind regards,

Kirsten Nesbitt
Healthy Schools Manager | Pacific Rim School District
Email: knesbitt@sd70.bc.ca | Phone: 250-735-2399

School Meal Program Enrollment Form 2025-2026

By completing this form, I indicate that my student would like to receive lunches and snacks as part of the School Meal Program for the 2025-2026 school year.

I understand that if I no longer want my student to participate in the program, I will notify the school secretary immediately.

I acknowledge that any contributions I make to Nourish are used to support the School Meal Program as a whole, and that *our School Meal Program operates on the principle that everyone is welcome, and nobody will be turned away. Enrollment helps us plan and order food effectively.*

STUDENT NAME:
PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME:
PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE:

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS FORM TO THE SCHOOL