



# Foothills Community Christian School

## Lunch Warm-up Program Guidelines

Dear parents/guardians and students;

In absence of a hot lunch program, Foothills Community Christian School offers a Lunch Warm-up Program for our students. Below is an overview of our warm-up program and the guidelines that should be followed by families when utilizing it.

**What is our program?** The lunch warm-up program is designed to offer our students an opportunity to enjoy a warm lunch that can be heated in a microwave in **3.5 minutes or less, total**. The original intent was to allow students the opportunity to bring in left overs from home in lieu of a cold lunch. We have expanded this to include limited types of other microwavable meals. Due to limited time, varying volunteer manpower and a high number of daily warm-ups, food items should not require over 3.5 minutes total to heat. We **do not** supply utensils, paper plates, bowls, cups, condiments, or napkins. **All supplies needed to heat, mix, and consume food items, must be supplied from home, labeled (name and grade) and attached to the warm-up.**

**What can my student bring?** Students may bring (nut-free) microwavable food items that take a **total of 3.5 minutes or less** to heat. This includes food items that have multiple steps such as Kid Cuisine, Marie Callender's and other frozen meals. If step one requires 1.5 minutes to heat and step two requires an additional 2 min, this is an acceptable warm-up. If step one requires 3 minutes and step two requires 2 minutes this should not be sent (See Attachment A).

### **Please follow the below listed guidelines when sending a warm-up to school for your student:**

1. All items a student brings should have their **name and grade** written on it. This includes any utensils, plates, bowls, and condiments, that are provided along with the warm-up itself. All items should be labeled to ensure they are given to the correct student in the correct grade.
2. Students should be sent with a **utensil to eat and if needed, a utensil for our warm -up volunteers to mix/stir the food item (macaroni cups, boxed food items, Ramen Noodles, left overs that need stirring).**
3. **Paper plates should be sent with any food item not in a microwavable container or prepackaged box.** This includes: Pizza Lunchables, Chicken Nugget Lunchables, Pizza slices, mini corn dogs, hush puppies, pizza pockets, pizza rolls, chicken wings etc.... Please **do not send Styrofoam** plates, cups or bowls as these cannot be microwaved. Please be aware not all paper plates are microwave safe for example: some decorative birthday plates will state on the bottom they should not be placed in the microwave and can cause fires. Please always check before you send.
4. Applicable warm-ups should be sent in a **microwave safe, non-glass container**. Please check your containers prior to sending them to school to ensure they are microwave safe. Most containers indicate this on the bottoms. Glass containers get extremely hot on the exterior and can cause burns to our volunteers and students.



## Foothills Community Christian School

### Lunch Warm-up Program Guidelines

5. All food items should be ready to consume after microwaving. Meaning items should come already cut up, peeled, and otherwise prepared. Fruit such as oranges or apples should be pre-peeled if your student is unable to peel them themselves in a timely manner.
6. If a warm up item does not have instructions on the package and you wish for the item to be heated in a specific manner (Grades K-5), please include written instructions with the warm up. \*\*\* **Please note** our microwaves vary from 700-1200 watts, may heat differently than the microwave at your home, and frozen food items are typically thawed by lunchtime.

#### \* Recommendations for K-5:

Please tape or otherwise secure any provided utensil to each warm-up (macaroni cups, boxed frozen lunches etc....) and ensure it is placed into the students warm up basket each morning.

Please ensure the students name is written on the border or back side of any paper plates provided and on utensils. \*\*\* **Sharpie marker will transfer onto food items** if written on the heating surface of a plate.

#### What should my student NOT bring?

1. Students should not bring any food item that contains nuts or takes over 3.5 min total to heat.
2. Students should not bring food items in Styrofoam such as soup from a restaurant unless a microwave safe bowl is also sent with the soup or the soup requires no heating.
3. Students should not bring food items that require heating, in Ziplock style plastic bags without a paper plate included to heat the food on. For example, if you are sending items such as: left over pizza, pizza rolls, chicken nuggets, corn dogs or taquitos etc. in a plastic Ziplock style bag, you will also need to send a labeled paper plate for those to be heated on. Ziplock style plastic bags cannot go in the microwave.
4. Students **should not bring warm up items in glass containers** (Attachment B) as these get extremely hot and can cause burns both to our volunteers and to our students.
5. Students should not bring **unopened canned food**. For example: Students should not send an unopened can of SpaghettiOs or soup. If a student wishes to have this type of warm up it should be brought to school in a leak proof microwavable container ready to go into the microwave or in a pre-heated thermos that requires no warm-up.
6. Students should not bring items that need to be cut up. For example, a full steak. If a student wishes to bring steak the steak should be pre-cut up and sent with a plate or other microwavable safe container. This is especially important for our lower elementary kids.



# Foothills Community Christian School

## Lunch Warm-up Program Guidelines

### FAQ

#### **What if my K-5 student's lunch includes an item that only needs refrigeration?**

1. Place the individual item in the class warm-up bin and label it "DO NOT HEAT". Always include name and grade on your labels. Do not place full lunch bags/boxes in the warm-up bin.
2. Bentgo containers or containers of a similar nature, that require refrigeration, may be placed in their entirety into the warm-up bins. Containers should be labeled with the student's name and grade.
3. Ensure that all items can be opened, peeled and if required, assembled, by your student. For example, Pizza Lunchables, these will need to be assembled by your student during their lunch and our volunteers will heat upon request. These will not be pre-assembled by our volunteers.
4. If an item needs to be cut or peeled (apples, oranges) and your student can not do it themselves in a timely manner, the items should be sent pre-peeled and pre-cut.

#### **What if my K-5 student's lunchbox contains both a warm-up item and cold lunch items that do not require refrigeration?**

1. Items that require warming should be removed from the student's lunch bag and placed separately in the warm-up bin. Please make sure it is labeled with the child's name and grade.
2. Lunch bags containing the remaining items should then be stored with your child's personal items on the hallway shelf/locker or as directed by their teacher.

**\*\*\* If warm up items are placed in lunch boxes, please ensure your student knows they are there so they can remove them and get them placed into the warm-up bin if a parent is not assisting them in the morning. When warm-up items do not get placed into the warm-up bins in the mornings and have to be warmed after the students come into the lunchroom to eat, it can significantly decrease the amount of time they have to eat it.**

**Are lunches warmed for all grades by our volunteers?** No. Our warm-up volunteers' warm lunches for our K-5 students only. Students in grades 6-12 warm their own lunches.

**What happens if my student forgets a utensil or paper plate?** In emergency situations one may be able to be provided to your K-5 student if available. Please keep in mind supplies may not always be available and parents should make every effort to ensure their student(s) bring all necessary items daily. 6-12 students may have the option to purchase plates or plastic utensils from the Snack Shak when it is open and if supplies are available.

#### **Who can I contact if I have questions related to lunch warm-ups or volunteering in the lunchroom?**

You can Contact Stephanie Semenza, Lunchroom Coordinator at 406-799-1167 or at [stephanie\\_semenza@yahoo.com](mailto:stephanie_semenza@yahoo.com)



# Foothills Community Christian School

## Lunch Warm-up Program Guidelines

### Attachment A

Below are some visual representations of acceptable and unacceptable lunch warm up food items.

Marie Callender's chicken pot pies = 5.5-6 heating time

Unopened canned good



Left overs 2 min



Macaroni cup 3.5 min





# Foothills Community Christian School

## Lunch Warm-up Program Guidelines

### Attachement B

#### Examples of Acceptable microwavable containers

(Please double check that all containers indicate they are microwave safe on the container. Generally, this is indicated on the bottoms and/or lids. If a container does not indicate this, we will not warm it as it may melt or catch fire.)

#### Meal Prep containers



#### Paper plates



#### Rapid Ramen Cooker

(can also be used for other food items)

