



Best Practices for Snack Pantries

Circumstances can change in an instant. An unexpected expense can devastate a family's financial stability. Precious resources may then be diverted from the food budget to meet unplanned needs leaving a family short on funds for groceries. A no-limitations snack pantry can help.

Goal:

A snack pantry is designed to provide food to staff and students with no restrictions or requirements. The food may be consumed on site or taken for home use.

Logistics:

Some school districts require a memorandum of understanding before an organization can stock a snack pantry, so be sure to check the local policies before proceeding.

A closet or storage room at the school is stocked with a variety of foods, including both snacks and meals. We stock monthly or as needed. One school employee is usually in charge of distribution, often the school nurse or counselor. He/she may offer food to students/staff who miss the usual meal time or complain of hunger, or distribute food when requested. Food may be offered discretely for after-school time where needs exist. Because a staff member distributes the food, parental consent is not required.

What to stock:

All food items must be shelf-stable and meet school district guidelines regarding nuts, fish/shellfish, and choking hazards. Expiration date must be later than the next scheduled restock. Be sure to check expiration dates at each restocking.

Suggested snacks:

Protein packs, nuts (if allowed), dried or canned fruit, shelf-stable yogurt, pudding, chips, cookies.

Meals:

Breakfast: Pop tarts or shelf-stable breakfast pastries. Oatmeal packets.

Lunch: Canned chicken or chicken salad with cracker kits, single-serving entree items.

Meals: Pasta, pasta sauces, family-sized cans of beef stew, canned ham, or other meals.

Optional:

A box for prayer requests with a supply of pens and blank cards is greatly appreciated, especially if staff/students are confident someone will pray. **REQUESTS MUST BE KEPT PRIVATE** unless they indicate danger to someone. **Free Scripture encouragement cards** are another item to include in the pantry.