

CHILD NUTRITION INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

All district students may, but are not required to, participate in any or all of the district's child nutrition program services. The district participates in the following USDA child nutrition programs:

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP)
- Farm to School

Although the district complies with all USDA child nutrition program requirements, this policy is designed to provide families with pertinent information regarding meals at schools. Any individual who wishes to obtain more detailed information about the district's programs may contact the child nutrition coordinator.

Cafeteria Use

Except under special circumstances² all students will eat in the cafeteria or other designated location.

Guests must be cleared by the building principal prior to joining a student in the cafeteria. Non-district individuals or groups who wish to use the cafeteria must also be cleared by the building principal.

Meal Costs

The superintendent will establish the cost for meals prior to the beginning of each school year. Meal costs will be widely publicized and posted in the cafeteria.

Meal Payments

Students are encouraged to pre-pay for meals to ensure quicker checkout in the cafeteria and to reduce the likelihood of forgotten or lost lunch money. Students may pre-purchase meals through the main office or child nutrition coordinator's office during school hours. Parents may also pre-purchase meals for their student online through the district's student information system.

The district provides several options to keep parents informed of their student's meal account balance. The district will send a weekly notice to parents when a child's account balance is \$10.00 or less.

Parents may also check their child's account balance online through the parent information system.

² Special circumstances include, but are not limited to, lunch detention, severe food allergies, and IEP requirements. The district will not separate students during meals based on a student's ability to pay.

Free and Reduced Price Meals

All families will have the opportunity to submit an application for free and/or reduced priced meals. This application must be completed each year. The district will utilize federal guidelines in determining eligibility for free and/or reduced price meals, and those guidelines will be publicized with other notices regarding the district's child nutrition program. The child nutrition coordinator is responsible for reviewing applications and determining eligibility. The child nutrition coordinator is responsible for promptly notifying families whether their application has been approved and following up with families who have submitted incomplete applications.

Any family who wishes to appeal a decision regarding their eligibility may make an appeal to the board clerk. If an appeal is filed, the individual will be notified of the date and time for an appeal hearing. Individuals may bring a representative with them to any appeal hearing.

School personnel will use discretion in handling applications, and the names of students eligible for free/reduced price meals will not be published, posted, announced, etc. Students receiving free/reduced price meals will not:

- Use a separate cafeteria or area of the cafeteria
- Use a separate serving line
- Enter the cafeteria through a different entrance
- Eat meals at a different time
- Work for their meals
- Use a different method at the checkout
- Eat a different meal

Charging Meals

Students in grades Pre-K through 8 who do not qualify for free meals may charge a maximum of 3 meals at school prior to May 1st. No charges will be permitted after May 1st. All meals which are charged will be alternate/reimbursable meals.

Students who have exceeded the charge limit and students who are without lunch funds after May 1st will receive up to 5 alternate meals if they do not have money to pay for their meals. The cost of these meals will be added to the family's delinquent account balance. A schedule of these meal prices will be posted in the cafeteria with other prices.

The alternate meal will be presented to the student as low-cost reimbursable entrée regularly included on the menu.

Collecting Debt

The district must work to ensure that its child nutrition services are run in a fiscally responsible manner. Families will be notified when their child's account balance is low so that the account can be replenished. If a child's account has a negative balance, the following steps will be taken:

1. An initial notice of delinquent account, along with another copy of this policy, will be sent home with the student in a plain envelope once the student's balance is negative. Up to 3 additional weekly notices may be sent in this manner. If the child nutrition coordinator is aware of community resources which may be available to families in need of financial assistance, the child nutrition coordinator may include information regarding those resources with the notice.
2. The child nutrition coordinator will attempt to contact families via phone, email, or through other personal contact if their account is still delinquent after 3 notices. The child nutrition coordinator is authorized to enter into a repayment plan with the family at the child nutrition coordinator's discretion.
3. If the account remains delinquent despite these efforts to collect the debt, the superintendent will assess the situation to determine whether the account should be referred to an outside collection agency. The superintendent is also responsible for determining whether the debt should be reclassified as bad debt and how the funds will be restored to the child nutrition program.

No student will be permitted to participate in any extracurricular activities if their account is \$25.00 delinquent.