

FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Food and Nutrition Services

Frequently Asked Questions

Please visit the Food Services webpage at:

<https://www.fairfieldschools.org/departments/finance/food-services>

❖ ***How does the school meal service work? How does my child purchase a school meal?***

Each student is assigned a meal account that they can access by scanning their meal ID card or entering their student ID number on the register's keypad. Their student ID number remains the same throughout the years the child is enrolled in FPS. A meal account enables parents to deposit money for the purchase of school meals and to track what is being purchased.

❖ ***How do I deposit money into my child's meal account?***

You can deposit money into your child's account three different ways:

- 1) Send in cash with your child.** At the elementary schools, the full amount of cash remitted is always deposited into the student's account (change is not provided). At the middle and high schools, as long as the account is not overdrawn, change can be given back to the student (i.e. the child presents \$20 to the cashier, \$10 can be applied to the account and \$10 can be returned to the student). High school students cannot have a negative balance in their account.
- 2) Pay by check** made payable to **Fairfield Public Schools Lunch**. Please include your child's name and student ID number in the memo section of the check. If you have more than one child **in the same school** you can send in one check, but please clearly note the names and dollar amount that should go into each child's account. One check cannot be deposited to multiple schools. All cash or check payments can be deposited at the register/point of sale. **Please note:** There is a \$15 fee for returned checks. Repayment of returned checks plus the fee is expected immediately.
- 3) Pay online through your Infinite Campus parent portal.** When you log into IC's Campus Parent, you will see a **My Accounts** and **My Cart** option under the Food Service tab. Use **My Cart** to add money to meal accounts. Simply add all payments to the cart and then checkout. Use **My Accounts** to manage payment methods, recurring payments and payment history from one location. Payment set-up should be done from a desktop or laptop computer and we recommend the use of Chrome or Firefox as a browser. You must be logged into your IC parent portal to enter your payment method (credit/debit card or checking), not your child's or another family member's IC portal. You can locate the **Online Payment Instructions** on the Food Services webpage.

Please note: A 4% service fee is assessed for each online or recurring payment.

❖ ***How can I see what my child is purchasing? How can I view my child's account?***

Account information can be viewed on your IC parent portal. Log into your account and select the Food Service tab. Select the account name to see a list of items that have been purchased. All purchase information will be available to view the following day after the purchase was made.

❖ ***What if I see a discrepancy in my child's account?***

Please contact Food Services at (203) 255-8370 or FoodSvc@fairfieldschools.org if you would like to discuss your child's account. Please note that you must contact us within 2 weeks of the disputed transaction.

❖ ***How can I receive low balance notifications for my child's meal account?***

- 1) There are two ways you can set-up to receive low balance notifications. The district sends out low balance notifications once a student's meal account reaches below \$10. These notices are sent through General Notification on Infinite Campus. To set-up your Contact Preferences to receive these notifications, first log into your IC parent portal. Under the **User Account** section select the **Contact Preferences** tab. Check off the **General Notification** boxes for each method/device you would like to receive a notice. **Please note:** Many of the school's messages/notifications are set-up as General Notification. Checking those boxes will give you access to all those messages.
- 2) The second method allows you to set-up your own low balance notice, separate from the one the district generates. It is located in the Notification Settings in IC. To access, log into your IC parent portal. Under the **User Account** section select the **Notification Settings** tab. Check off the **Low Lunch Balance** box and then select the dollar amount you want to be notified once the meal account balance goes below this amount.

❖ ***Why am I getting a low balance alert?***

Infinite Campus will notify parents when their child's meal account balance goes below \$10. You will not be alerted again unless there is a purchase made that further lowers the balance. To set-up your Contact Preferences in IC to receive these low balance notices, log into your IC parent portal and under the **User Account** section select the **Contact Preferences** tab. Check off the **General Notification** boxes for each method/device you would like to receive a notice.

❖ ***Why was my child not allowed to charge meal items today?***

In general, if your child's account goes into a zero or negative balance, elementary and middle school students are still provided a regular meal but funds must be deposited in your child's account to avoid further notification. Ala carte items and second meals cannot be charged against a zero/negative balance. High school students cannot charge school meals against a zero balance. They will need cash, check or money in their account to charge/purchase school meals. Please see the **Meal Charge Policy** on the Food Services webpage for more information.

❖ ***How do I apply for free or reduced-price meals?***

You can locate the **Free and Reduced-price School Meals Application** in the Links section of the Food Services webpage. Please read the information in the packet **carefully** to fill out the form correctly. Forms that are incomplete or incorrect will delay processing of your application. Once a completed application is received, it can take up to ten operating days (when schools are open & serving school meals) to process the application. Please ensure your child has sufficient funds in their account to cover the cost of meals until you receive notification of their eligibility. **Please note: Ala carte items and second meals are not part of the free/reduced-price benefit.** We are not responsible for applications that do not reach the Food Services Dept. Please mail or drop off at: Fairfield Public Schools, Food Services, 501 Kings Hwy East, Suite 210, Fairfield, CT 06825 or email a copy to FoodSvc@fairfieldschools.org.

Please note: You may apply for the free and reduced-price program anytime during the school year, should your income or household size change. If you are approved, the eligibility extends **only** throughout the current school year. A new application needs to be submitted at the start of each new school year.

❖ ***Why is my child incurring a charge when they are free or reduced?***

Students approved for free or reduced meals are eligible to receive **one** free/reduced breakfast (if served) and **one** free/reduced lunch per day. Additional meals are at the full price of \$5.00. Ala carte items are not eligible in the free/reduced program, but can be purchased at an additional cost. Please see the **School Lunch & Ala Carte Pricing Chart** on the Food Services webpage.

❖ ***If I received a letter last year that my child was approved for free or reduced meals, does that carry over into the next school year?***

Each **new** school year requires a **new Free and Reduced-price School Meals Application**. If you received a Direct Certification of eligibility letter last year, then submit an application only if you **do not** receive a new DC letter stating your child's latest eligibility for the new school year. Please see the **Free and Reduced-price School Meals Application** on the Food Services webpage.

❖ ***If my child is eligible for free or reduced-price meals, how can I get fee waivers or reductions to other programs (i.e. field trips, musical instruments, testing fees, caps & gowns, camps etc.) in our district?***

The easiest and fastest way to demonstrate your child's eligibility for these programs is to **retain several copies of the eligibility letter you receive from Fairfield Public Schools stating your child's current school year's free or reduced status and to present this letter to the program you seek a fee reduction or waiver from**. Requests for additional copies of your letter **may not be made** available to you in the timeframe needed for that program's registration. If you wish FPS to provide information to other programs, we **must have your signed written approval** in order to share your child's eligibility status. A **Sharing Information with Other Programs** form is supplied with the Free and Reduced-price School Meals Application packet. Please complete the form, sign and submit with your application. If you are approved, the form will remain on file in Central Office. If your child is Directly Certified for free or reduced-price meals, you will receive a **Sharing Information with Other Programs** form along with your eligibility letter in the mail. Please complete the form, sign and return it to our office as soon as possible. Information will only be shared with other persons/programs **listed** on the form. Please retain a copy of this form with your child's eligibility letter. Please see the **Sharing Information with Other Programs** on the Food Services webpage.

❖ ***Where can I locate the school meal menus?***

Please see the menu viewing tool, **FD MealPlanner**, on the Food Services webpage. Please note that menus are subject to change due to product availability. We recommend that you check the menus weekly to ensure you are selecting the appropriate meal for your child.

❖ ***Can you explain the different lunch menu options and pricing at the elementary, middle and high school levels?***

Students at the **elementary** level have 3 choices daily. The featured hot entree lunch, the weekly alternate and a bagel lunch. All are priced at \$2.85 per meal.

Students at the **middle school** level have 6 choices daily. The featured hot entree lunch, World Market, is priced at \$3.10 per meal. The Concept stations are: Great American, La Cucina, Miss Ruby's Grill, Frait Express and Coyote Grill. The Concept options are priced at \$4.05.

Students at the **high school level** have 6 choices daily. The featured hot entrée, World Market, is priced at \$3.15 per meal. The Concepts stations are: Great American, La Cucina, Miss Ruby's Grill, Frait Express and Coyote Grill. The Concept options are priced at \$4.05.

At **all school levels**, ala carte items are available for purchase at additional cost. Second meals may be purchased separately for \$5.00. School meals and ala carte items **may not be charged** if a student does not have funds in their account.

❖ ***What happens to my child's meal account at the end of the school year or when my child transitions to the middle or high school?***

Your child's meal account funds remain in your child's account throughout the years they attend FPS. You do not need to request a refund if your child is returning in the fall. When your child transitions to the middle or high school, their account will transition as well.

❖ ***How can I request a transfer of school meal account money from one child to another? How can I donate the balance or get a refund of my child's meal account?***

Please complete the **Meal Account Transfer, Refund or Donation Request Form** located on the Food Services webpage. Please mail or drop off at: Fairfield Public Schools, Food Services, 501 Kings Hwy East, Suite 210, Fairfield, CT 06825 or email to FoodSvc@fairfieldschools.org. All requests must be in writing.

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