

Spring-Ford Area School District Food Services Negative Balance Procedure

The Spring-Ford Area School District Food Services Department takes pride in serving nutritious meals daily to our students, but we also feel strongly that there is an obligation to take care of debts in a timely manner. There is a responsibility on the part of the parents/guardians to satisfy all financial obligations to the lunch program. In accordance with state law our schools will provide a school food program meal to students who request one regardless of whether or not the student has money to pay for it (unless the student's parent/guardian provide a written directive to withhold the meal). However, such meals will be charged to the student's account accordingly.

We understand that parents are busy and may occasionally forget to pack a lunch or send in money. The school food service program strives to be self-funded and operate in a financially responsible manner. In order to provide students, parents/guardians and staff with the best possible service, clarity and accountability surrounding the school lunch program, the following procedures regarding student lunch account balances have been implemented.

Procedures for Students with No Money for Lunch or a Negative Account Balance

Step 1- When the student does not have money in his/her lunch account the **FIRST time**:

- A regular lunch is available to the student and charged to his/her account.
- No A la Carte items or snack items can be taken with the lunch but may be sold ONLY if paid for with cash. Any change from the transaction must be given back to the student. This also pertains to Free and Reduced students.

Step 2- When the student does not have money in his/her lunch account the **SECOND time**:

- A regular lunch is available to the student and charged to his/her account.
- Food Services will send a letter home to the parent/guardian informing them of the amount owed and requesting they send money in the next school day, or pay the amount owed using online payments.
- No A la Carte items or snack items can be taken with the lunch but may be sold ONLY if paid for with cash. Any change from the transaction must be given back to the student. This also pertains to Free and Reduced students.

Step 3- When the student does not have money in his/her lunch account the **THIRD time**:

- A regular lunch is available to the student and charged to his/her account.
- School principal will be notified by the Food Service Manager and asked to make contact with the household, informing them of the amount owed and request they send money in with the student the next school day, or pay the amount owed using online payments.
- No A la Carte items or snack items can be taken with the lunch but may be sold ONLY if paid for with cash. Any change from the transaction must be given back to the student. This also pertains to Free and Reduced students.

Step 4- When the student does not have money in his/her lunch account the **FOURTH time**:

- A regular lunch is available to the student and charged to his/her account.
- As with any other outstanding student obligations, the student may not be allowed to participate in extra-curricular activities and/or social activities until the debt is repaid.

- No A la Carte items or snack items can be taken with the lunch but may be sold ONLY if paid for with cash. Any change from the transaction must be given back to the student. This also pertains to Free and Reduced students.

Step 5- When the student does not have money in his/her lunch account the **FIFTH time and beyond:**

- A regular lunch is available to the student and charged to his/her account.
- As with any other outstanding student obligations, the student may not be allowed to participate in extra-curricular activities and/or social activities until debt is repaid.
- The Food Services Department will make at least two attempts to contact the parent/guardian and have them apply for participation in the Free and Reduced Program.
- No A la Carte items or snack items can be taken with the lunch but may be sold ONLY if paid for with cash. Any change from the transaction must be given back to the student. This also pertains to Free and Reduced students.

MONTHLY NOTIFICATION:

The Business Office will send letters to parents/guardians regarding their student's negative balance requesting payment of the debt and again informing parents/guardians of the potential for their student not being permitted to participate in activities until the debt is settled.

Payment Plan/Free & Reduced Lunch Program

The Spring-Ford Area School District Food Services Department understands that some families may be facing financial difficulties. Payment plans can be made available by contacting us at **610-705-6209** or emailing **foodservice@spring-ford.net**.

Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to submit Free and Reduced lunch application forms annually as well as any time during the year when their household information or income changes. While we strongly encourage families to apply for the Free and Reduced meal benefits, the final application responsibility lies with the parents/guardians.

- Apply online at Pennsylvania's COMPASS website:
<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/compass.web/CMHOM.aspx>
- Print an application from the SFASD website: <http://spring-ford.net/about-spring-ford/departments/food-service>

If you have questions on how to complete the application, please review the instructions or contact the Food Services Department office at **610-705-6209** or emailing **foodservice@spring-ford.net**.

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