



NOTICE: CHARGING FOR SCHOOL MEALS WILL BEGIN ON MARCH 1, 2023

January 9, 2023

Dear Parents and Guardians,

This is an important notice about free school meals.

Near the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the USDA issued waivers that allowed all students to have free meals until the end of the 2021-2022 school year regardless of their family income.

Hamden Public Schools was able to begin the current school year with no cost meals regardless of family income **on a temporary basis** because we received School Meals Assistance Revenue for Transition (SMART) Funds from the State of Connecticut.

Unfortunately, the SMART Funds have run out, which means that Tuesday, February 28, 2023 will be the last day for free school meals at Alice Peck, Bear Path, Spring Glen, West Woods, Hamden Middle, Hamden High, Hamden Transition Academy, and Wintergreen/HCLC. (Please note that school meals will remain free for the rest of the 2022-2023 school year at Church Street, Dunbar Hill, Helen Street, Ridge Hill, and Shepherd Glen schools because they are operating under the Community Eligibility Provision of the National School Lunch Program.)

For clarification, if your child currently has free or reduced-price meal status it will not change on March 1st. Your child may have free or reduced-price status if you have submitted an application and it was approved or through the state direct certification program. **On March 1st the change to charging for meals will specifically impact households with students who have paid or reduced-price status at Alice Peck, Bear Path, Spring Glen, West Woods, Hamden Middle, Hamden High, Hamden Transition Academy, and Wintergreen/HCLC.** If you have any questions about your child's current meal status please email mealapplication@hamden.org or call 203-407-2205.

Parents and guardians are encouraged to apply for free and reduced-price meals if they haven't done so yet. Eligibility is based on income and household size. **A fully online free and reduced-price meal application is available [here](#).** A downloadable application is available [here](#). For a hardcopy application, please inquire at your school's main office.

Meal Prices are as follows:

	<i>Breakfast</i>	<i>Lunch</i>
<i>Elementary Schools</i>	\$1.15	\$2.75
<i>Middle School</i>	\$1.40	\$3.00
<i>High School</i>	\$1.40	\$3.75

Hamden Public Schools uses [MySchoolBucks](#) for school meal payments. This system allows parents and guardians to set up an account for their child and add money to the account as needed for school meals. Students simply enter their account code at the cafeteria register and are able to purchase meals without having to worry about having cash available. You can sign-up online or download the app at www.myschoolbucks.com. You will need your child's Student ID# to finalize the setup. If you don't know it, ask your child's school office.

Please review the Hamden Public Schools [meal charging policy](#). The district strongly discourages meal charges but understands that an occasional emergency makes it necessary. We ask that charging privileges be exercised as infrequently as possible and not used as a payment practice. It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to keep track of their student account balances and avoid negative balances.

Lastly, we want to spread the news that [SNAP \(Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program\) eligibility has recently been expanded in Connecticut. Now more households are eligible for food assistance.](#) SNAP is a federally funded program that was created to assist individuals and families to supplement their food budget. One of the many benefits of SNAP is that participation in the program automatically makes your child eligible for free school meals. You can check to see if you now qualify for SNAP benefits by going to www.connect.ct.gov and clicking "Am I Eligible?".

Thank you very much.

Regards,

Gary Highsmith
Superintendent
Hamden Public Schools

Thomas Ariola
Chief Operating and Financial Officer
Hamden Public Schools

Nondiscrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly regarding matters related to the school meal program.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained [online](#), from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:** program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.