

Medford Public Schools Meal Charge Policy

The primary goal of the Medford Public Schools Food Service program is to provide students with healthy, nutritious meals each day to support their learning in school and overall health and growth. The department must also maintain the financial integrity of the program and minimize stigmatization of children with meal charges. Title 7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 210.10(a)(1) General Nutrition Requirements states “Schools must provide nutritious and well-balanced meals to all children they serve.” In accordance with this regulation, Medford Public Schools will not deny any student access to school meals. Unpaid meal charges place a financial burden on the Food Services Department, however, as this department is a self-supporting business.

This policy establishes procedures for methods of payment, charge availability and collection methods. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with federal reporting requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program, and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances. The intent of this policy is to establish uniform meal account procedures throughout the Medford Public Schools.

A “reimbursable meal” is defined as a meal consisting of at least three of the five components (grain, meat or meat alternate, fruit, vegetable and milk) and must include a fruit and/or vegetable component. Students are entitled to one free reimbursable breakfast meal and one free reimbursable lunch meal per day. Additional meals and individual meal components (such as individual fruits or single milk) are not free and require payment. Students/Parents/Guardians can pay for meals in advance via at family.schoolcafe.com, by downloading the SchoolCafe Family app via [apple App store](https://apps.apple.com) or [Google Play](https://play.google.com), or with a check payable to Medford Food Service. After a student balance reaches zero and enters the negative, students will not be allowed to purchase a la carte items such as a second entrée, snack, or additional beverage.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for all meal payments to the food service program and are responsible for all meal charges incurred. Notices of low or deficit balances will be sent to parents/guardians via post mail, email, and/or a telephone call at regular intervals during the school year. If there is a financial hardship, please contact food services directly at 781-393-2241 to discuss payment options such as an individualized repayment plan.

Parents/Guardians have the ability to track student purchases via www.family.schoolcafe.com regardless of whether or not they use the website to deposit

money. Parents/Guardians have the ability to put a block on the account to prohibit the student from purchasing a la carte items. Purchase blocks that the Food Service Department can put on a student account include: "No Breakfast," "No Lunch," "No Snack Food," and "Cash Only for A La Carte." To put a block on your child's account, please contact the Food Service Office at 781-393-2241.

Refunds for withdrawn and/or graduating students require a written request for any funds remaining in their account. Refund requests should be submitted to the attention of: Food Service Director, 489 Winthrop Street, Medford, Massachusetts, 02155 or via an email request to the Food Service Director at meals@medford.k12.ma.us. Students have the option to transfer funds to a sibling's account at any time via the SchoolCafe website or app, or by contacting the Food Service Office. Funds may also be donated to a student with a negative balance at any time via the SchoolCafe website or app, or by contacting the Food Service Office. Any funds remaining six months after the graduation year or withdrawal date that have not had a refund request will be rolled to a student in need.