

School Lunch Account Policy

Purpose

Households shall ensure adequate funding in their child's lunch account to access nutritious meals while at school. Payment for school meals is expected at the time of purchase. This policy outlines the provisions that will be made when a child has insufficient funds to purchase a school meal. As outlined in [7 CFR 245.6\(a\)](#) and [\(f\)-\(k\)](#), students' payment status is confidential and will only be shared with pre-approved individuals with guardian's consent. This does not apply to adults, who are prohibited from charging.

Managing Account Balances

Balances may be reviewed by logging into the PowerSchool parent portal and clicking on SchoolPay. Through SchoolPay, parents may check balances, deposit money into student accounts electronically, and setup low balance notifications. Electronic payments may be made using credit, debit, or bank account. Money can also be added to an account at the school's office or by mail.

Low Balance Notification Procedures

This district will not overtly identify students in regards to their account balance and will contact guardians directly. When an account falls to the value of four (4) meals or less, an automated alert will be sent to the household through email or mailed letter. The automated alert will include the student's current balance, the district's policy on school lunch accounts, and an optional application for Free and Reduced Priced meals. The automated alerts will be sent twice weekly when the account balance is sufficient for four meals or less. The school may also make phone calls to notify households of a low balance. At the middle and high school levels, students will be informed of low account balances by nutrition services staff in a discreet manner.

Charging and Negative Lunch Account Balances

Students are allowed to charge reimbursable meals when sufficient funds aren't available. Charging is not allowed for a la carte items or extras. Students attempting to do so will be discreetly reminded of the restriction and respectfully asked to return the items to the cashier. Students with negative account balances will not be penalized. Students will receive charged reimbursable meals with the following parameters:

1. Reimbursable meals provided without sufficient funds will be tracked as a charge in the student's lunch account. Negative balances will be paid in full when funds are supplied by the household.
2. When a balance is between zero (\$0.00) and negative ten dollars (-\$10.00), parents will receive phone call messages from nutrition services (middle and high school) or school office staff (elementary schools) in addition to twice weekly automated texts and email alerts.
3. When a balance exceeds negative ten dollars (-\$10.00), households will be contacted by school administration. Households may be requested to meet with a school official, such as the principal, social worker, or school counselor for resolution.

4. At the middle and high school level, when a balance exceeds negative twenty dollars (-\$20.00), students will lose the privilege to purchase a la carte items or extras with cash. Students attempting to do so will be discreetly reminded of the restriction and respectfully asked to return the items to the cashier.

5. When a balance exceeds negative thirty dollars (-\$30.00), a mailed notification will be sent to the household. The letter will include:
 - a. The account balance at the time the letter was mailed;
 - b. A copy of the district’s School Lunch Account policy;
 - c. A copy of the application for Free and Reduced Priced meals; and
 - d. Notification that the debt will be routed to the Business Office for collection. The district will consider individual circumstances and will work with households to establish a plan for repayment.

Account Balances

Positive balances will carry over into the next school year. For students leaving the district with \$10 or more in their account, households will automatically receive a refund in the mail at the end of the year. Requests for refunds, transfers to siblings, or donations of funds remaining in accounts are accommodated if made by June 15 of the recently completed school year. Requests can be made by a listed guardian by going online or by calling the nutrition services office.

Funds remaining in inactive accounts after June 15 will automatically be donated to help struggling families with negative meal balances. A review for siblings remaining in the district will occur before donating the funds.

Negative balances will carry forward to the following school year and the correlating alerts will resume. For students exiting the district at any time, negative balances will be classified as delinquent debt and the district will continue collection efforts.

Free and Reduced Price Meal Applications

Applications for Free or Reduced Priced meals are available at the school buildings, the FPS District Office, and online on the school district’s website. Applications are accepted any time during the school year. Contact Nutrition Services at 701-446-1153 with any questions.

July 2017
 Revised 7/2018
 Revised 9/2018
 Revised 8/2019
 Revised 1/2020
 Reviewed 10/2020
 Revised 7/2023
 Revised 6/2024