



Grove City Area School District Dining Services **School Meals Account Procedures**

Grove City Area School District strongly recommends that if your child is going to purchase school meals that you monitor the meal account to keep a positive balance.

If you feel your family could qualify for free or reduced priced meals, please go to www.schoolcafe.com to fill out an online application. The online school café system is easy and quick to use and processes the applications more quickly than printed paper applications.

Printed applications can also be picked up at the main office of any school. If you need assistance with the application or need a non-English application, please don't hesitate to ask for help. Contact: Jennifer Reiser, Director of Food Service at jennifer.reiser@gcasdk12.org or your child's school counselor.

All free and reduced meal information is strictly confidential. All students are identified with a pin number, which is their school district student ID number.

As they enter the café, the students will type their student ID number into a pin pad to bring up their student account to pay for their meal. The system is confidential and will not identify if a child is free, reduced or paid.

In order to better help identify families in need, a weekly Direct Certification will be performed by the Director of Food Services in the Primero Edge point of sale system. This process will match families in the state system based on certain criteria to assign them to free benefits for the school meals program. This process will help to control the negative balances by helping families that qualify for free meals on a weekly basis.

If you receive an email or letter stating that your family has been Directly Certified, you do not need to submit another application. If you notice that you have more children that should be eligible for these benefits living in the household, but are not listed on the letter, please contact Jennifer Reiser, Director of Food Service at jennifer.reiser@gcasdk12.org or 724.458.7704.

Payments to a student's meal accounts will be accepted in the following ways:

1. Log into www.schoolcafe.com website and pay by credit card or ACH withdrawal with a minimal convenience processing fee.
2. Students may add money on their accounts in the morning or during time of purchase. Please note that when adding money during the meal service slows the lines. It is recommended to drop off money or checks in the morning.

Negative Balance Collection Procedures

Communication of Balances

A complete meal will be provided to all students regardless if they have any money on their student meal account or not. This meal will be charged to the student's lunch account and will need to be paid for at another time by the parents or guardian.

School meals will never be denied to a student; however, students will not be permitted to purchase ala carte items if they do not have money on hand or money on their school meal account. Cashiers will remind and encourage students to take the complete meal and will ask the students to remove the a la carte packaged items from their tray, but anything that is ready-to-eat and once touched by a student cannot be sold to another student, will be charged to the student's account. The cashier will notify the student that they will need to bring in money to purchase a la carte items.

All communication regarding negative debt will be adult to adult. Cashiers will not communicate any negative account balances to the students grades K-8, unless a student asks about the balance. Cashiers will remind students grades 9-12 when their accounts are starting to become low and when the accounts have become delinquent.

Parents are strongly encouraged to sign up online at www.schoolcafe.com to help them monitor their child(ren)'s school meals account. They can view purchases, receive low balance alerts to notify them to submit a payment, view purchase and payment history as well as set up purchase restrictions. For convenience, www.schoolcafe.com has a mobile app to download to your phone.

Parents of students with negative meal account balances will be notified weekly with automated emails and/or letters sent home by the Director of Food Service.

At the end of each month, the Food Service Director will work closely with Director of Pupil Services to help identify families than may need additional assistance or help families that are not responding to paying off negative balances. We will also aid families by helping them apply for free and reduced priced meals.

Payment Plan Options

If a family decides they want to set up a payment plan, to determine the payment plan option, divide the negative balance by 12 months. This will be the monthly payment that must be made on the date determined by both parties. Should the payment not be submitted, a personal phone call made home to the family by the Director of Food Service and notification letter will be mailed home.

End of Year Negative Accounts

The Food Service Director will work closely with the school counselors if not receiving any response to payment from the family. If no response is made by the parents regarding negative balances, the District will determine on a case by case basis to seek restitution with a collection agency.

Graduating Senior Balances

If a senior graduating has a positive balance and has a younger sibling within the Grove City School District, the remaining money will be automatically transferred to the younger sibling's account, unless otherwise stated from the parent.

Any positive money a graduating senior account will receive an email and/or letter notifying them of the positive balance. The email and/or letter will offer options to the parent as to what they can do with the remaining money: donate to another family or friend or refund the money. The money donated will be added to the account of the family they wish to donate or if no family was chosen, but they still wish to donate, the money will be determined on a case by case basis working closely with the Director of Pupil Services. If efforts to contact the household to return the remaining funds was unsuccessful, the SFA must follow state treasury requirement (PA Unclaimed Property law) for any dollar value.

Random Act of Kindness Account

We have created a "Random Acts of Kindness Fund". These funds, often provided by families with children at the school, are placed in a general lunch account which may be tapped by children unable to pay for a meal. The District will determine on a case by case basis working closely with the Director of Pupil Services which families will receive the funds from this account. The District will first choose families that are eligible for the free & reduced meal program that may have accrued negative balances before they qualified for the program and are unable to pay for the meals consumed. We will also look at using these funds to help families that are struggling during this time and do not have the funds to pay for their children's meals and did not meet the requirements for qualifying for the free and reduced meal program.

We look forward to the opportunity to provide meal service to students on a daily basis and we appreciate when meal accounts are kept with a positive balance, so the experience is enjoyable for everyone.

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 at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, 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

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