

Local Meal Charge Procedure

Upper Merion Area School District

Student Lunch (grades 1-4) - \$3.00

Student Lunch (grades 5-12) - \$3.25

Breakfast is free for all students and all “reduced” lunches are considered free.

No UMASD students will be denied a meal for any reason unless a parent/guardian has put in writing and sent to Brittany Frazer, Food Service Supervisor via email/US Mail that they do not want UMASD to serve meals to their student(s) - bfrazer@umasd.org.

Students will not be penalized in any way for owing money to Food Service at the time of purchase. No one will be publicly identified or stigmatized, or made to work for meals, and no meals will be taken away and/or discarded from students. Students will be given the meal of their choice.

A meal consists of a meat/meat alternate, a grain, a choice of 2 fruits, a choice of 2 vegetables, and a milk. Students may take all 5 components, but at least 3 of those components including at least ½ cup fruit or vegetable must be on a tray for the food to be considered a meal. Food Service follows all the USDA National School Lunch and Breakfast Meal Pattern Guidelines.

This Local Meal Charge Policy will be posted on the Upper Merion Area School District website so households and staff all know how Food Service handles these situations.

Applying for the National School Lunch Program

UMASD HIGHLY encourages households to apply for free and reduced meals at www.schoolcafe.com at any time during the school year if they are having problems paying for their student’s meals. We remind households that:

- All school offices have paper applications in English and Spanish if needed.
- Food Service can get the application in 25 additional languages if necessary
- If households need any assistance they should contact Food Service at 610-205-8804 or email Brittany Frazer- bfrazer@umasd.org or Dorothea White- dwhite@umasd.org
- They may reapply for the National School Lunch Program if there is a change in household size or income
- Their students do not have to be U.S. citizens to qualify for free or reduced price meals

UMASD performs “Direct Certification” on a weekly basis to find any students from our district who have been certified as Free or Reduced via the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Access to Social Services (COMPASS) system.

Schoolcafe.com

UMASD encourages all households to use www.schoolcafe.com to apply for the National School Lunch Program and for advance and late payments for their student's cafeteria transactions. Credit or debit cards must be used and there is a \$1.95 transaction fee for this service and a \$100 transaction limit. To save that transaction fee, households may send in a check or cash with their student(s) who can give it to the cashier in the cafeteria to put money in their account. There is no transaction fee this way. It is free to sign up on www.schoolcafe.com and households can then get "low balance" email alerts, to see what student(s) are purchasing and set restrictions.

A La Carte Sales

A la carte items are sold at Middle School and High School. Students may purchase additional items if they have funds on their account or provide cash/check in person. Students will be denied a la carte items if there is not money on their account and if they have a negative meal balance even if they provide cash at the time of purchase. That student would only have the option to put the cash on their account to offset the negative balance.

Outstanding Balances

Cashiers will not initiate any conversations about outstanding balances with students in grades K-8. They may very discreetly speak with 9-12 students. UMASD cashiers will be very discreet when answering any questions that students may have about their balances and what they may purchase. Any info sent to a household via a student will be in a sealed envelope with the parent/guardian name and "confidential" written on it. UMASD will email/US mail statements to all households with outstanding balances of \$5.00 or more. This will include any students with 5 meal charges. Phone calls will also be made to parents/guardians who do not respond to emails/mail. Info about applying for the National School Lunch Program will be included in these communications. If necessary, Food Service will also get School Counselors, the Business Office and Administrators involved to help get payment. All communication will be directed to parents/guardians.

Bad Debt

At the end of every school year the "bad debt" that can't be collected from unpaid meals will be charged to the General Fund of the School District and that money will be paid to Food Service from the General Fund. By July 15th each year Food Service will give the total of Bad Debt to the Business office so the General Fund can cover these totals. However, Food Service will still work diligently to pursue the payment of these funds from households. The General Fund should not be abused by parents/guardians as an excuse to not pay their students negative balance.

Positive Balances Upon Leaving the District and Graduation

When students who have a positive balance in their Food Service account leave the district or graduate, households are sent info about the 3 choices they have about the balance. They can transfer the money to another account, donate it to students in need, or get a refund. Food Service will get active consent and document how it was received. If households do not respond, the Food Service will mail a letter in May to the households as a last attempt. If the funds cannot be returned then Food Service will follow PDE's guidelines about turning the funds over to the PA Dept of Treasury.

Donations

Donations to help needy students have grown and are very appreciated. Any monetary donations made to Food Service to help pay for unpaid meals will be deposited into the General Fund and then the General Fund will pay back Food Service for the total amount. The debit and credits in the General Fund will be very clear. If the money was earmarked for a certain student it will be applied to that specific student and if not, Food Service will apply it to needy students as determined at the time of the donation. Criteria to receive the donated funds can include, but not limited, to the following:

- Debt that accumulated before a household application was submitted and found to be either Free or Reduced
- Extenuating family circumstances such as sickness, accidents, fires...
- Recommendations from our Homeless Liaison, Guidance Counselors, Psychologists, or Administrators

UMASD Food Service will not accept donations from vendors or contractors.

Contact Info

Please contact Food Services if you have any questions:

Dorothea White, Food Service Specialist- dwhite@umasd.org, 610-205-8814

Brittany Frazer, Food Service Supervisor- bfrazer@umasd.org, 610-205-8804

Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter 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;
- (2) Fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) E-mail: program.intake@usda.gov.

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