



INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF TEXAS

CHILD NUTRITION DEPARTMENT

MEAL CHARGE/COURTESY MEAL POLICY

Introduction

The goal of the International Leadership of Texas (ILTexas) Child Nutrition Department (CND) is to provide students with healthy meals each day. Parents may provide their students with breakfast, lunch, or snacks as needed.

ILTexas CND shall provide annual notification to ILTexas households regarding the availability of reimbursable school meals and the option to apply for free or reduced-price meal benefits. In instances where a student lacks sufficient funds to purchase a meal, it presents a challenging circumstance for both the student and the school.

The purpose of this policy is for ILTexas CND to be compliant with federal, state, and local policies, and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances. As per the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), The Child Nutrition Department cannot absorb student negative balances.

Household Notification

ILTexas CND shall provide written notification to ILTexas households regarding the Meal Charge Policy annually, prior to the start of the school year, and upon enrollment of each transfer student. Additionally, families will be required to acknowledge the Charge/Courtesy Meal Policy during the registration process. The policy will also be accessible on the ILTexas website for reference.

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) ensures that all students at designated schools receive **nutritious breakfast and lunch meals** at no cost. This provision eliminates the requirement for meal applications and income verification for future school years. Families may refer to the Child Nutrition website for a list of schools participating in the CEP program.

Free and Reduced Meal Applications

Schools that do not qualify for CEP, hereinafter referred to as “non-CEP” schools, shall continue to collect Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications in accordance with standard eligibility procedures.

Families of students who attend a non-CEP school are asked to complete a Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application before the beginning of the academic year. Households can visit the Child Nutrition website <https://www.iltexas.org/families/child-nutrition> for assistance with applying for free or reduced-price school meals. If you aspire to use a paper Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application visit your local ILTexas School Campus or email childnutrition@iltexas.org to obtain a paper meal application.



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Transfer Students & 30-Day Carryover

Carryover (30 day-carryover) applies to all the eligibility determinations from the previous school year. Before processing household applications for the current school year, students from households with eligibility determinations from the preceding year may be served reimbursable free and reduced-price meals during the first thirty-day carryover period.

An ILTexas student transferring to a non-CEP ILTexas school from an ILTexas CEP school will receive a carryover eligibility of free for the first thirty operating days of enrollment or until a new eligibility determination is made with the submission of a free and reduced-price meal application, whichever comes first.

For a new student transferring from a CEP school (Out of charter school) to an ILTexas non-CEP school the carryover eligibility of free is thirty operating days, if no new eligibility is determined within the first thirty days the student will be assigned a paid status. The parent or legal guardian must provide the ILTexas Child Nutrition Department via email (childnutrition@ilTEXAS.org) with the full name of the student and the name of the departing school to be able to accommodate the carryover eligibility of free for the first thirty operating days.

New students enrolling in a non-CEP ILTexas school who did not transfer from a CEP School (In or out of the Charter), will have a meal status of paid on the first day of school until a Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application is submitted by the household and processed by ILTexas Child Nutrition Department.

Meal Identification Cards

All students must either carry or have memorized their Student ID number to receive meals in the cafeteria. This will help improve their cafeteria experience by speeding up service and ensuring accurate records.

- 💡 Students without an ID number may be asked to wait at the end of the serving line so the cashier can look up their information.
- 💡 No student will ever be denied a meal—we are committed to ensuring every student is served.

Please remind your student(s) to:

- Bring their Student ID daily, especially for breakfast or
- Memorize their Student ID number



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Menu Pricing

Schools that qualify for CEP for the academic school year offer one free breakfast and one free lunch per day to all students. At non-CEP schools, meal charges will be based on eligibility determined using information provided by the household on the Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application. For students eligible for free or reduced-price meals, one breakfast and one lunch per day will be provided at a free or reduced rate for the student. Menu pricing is kept up to date on the IL Texas Child Nutrition website.

Meal Charge Policy

ILTexas shall allow students to charge the price of their reimbursable meal to a meal account unique to the student. If the funds deposited into the student's meal account have been fully expended, ILTexas will provide students with a grace period that allows students to incur charges on their account until they reach the charge limit of \$50.00. Once a student has incurred a negative balance on their meal account, ILTexas Child Nutrition staff shall notify the student's parent or legal guardian weekly that the student's meal account has been depleted and that a negative balance has been incurred.

Courtesy Meals

The International Leadership of Texas Child Nutrition Department will provide a courtesy meal for students who are over the \$50.00 limit. Courtesy meals are offered to students with excessive negative meal balances. A courtesy meal is a reimbursable meal that conforms to USDA and TDA meal requirements (Entrée, side, and milk). For any student who has a medical statement for meal accommodation, the courtesy meal served to that student must meet the required accommodation.

Preventing Overt Identification

In order to reduce the possibility of overt identification, courtesy meals are made available to all students as a menu choice in the serving line and for sale as an a la Carte item during meal service.

Offer Versus Serve and Reimbursable Meals

Offer Versus Serve (OVS)-Refers to a practice where students are allowed to choose which items they want from the available food components, while still receiving a reimbursable meal.

In Offer Versus Serve (OVS) for breakfast - ILTexas must offer at least four food items from the three required components: fruits/vegetables, grains, and fluid milk. Students are then required to select at least three of these food items, one of which must be a ½ cup serving of fruit or vegetable.

Offer Versus Serve (OVS) for school lunch - ILTexas must offer all five required lunch components (meat/meat alternate, grain, fruit, vegetable, and milk). Students must then select at least three of these five components to receive a reimbursable lunch. One of the three components must be at least 1/2 cup of fruit or vegetable.



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Non-Reimbursable Meals

Whether at a CEP or non-CEP school, if a student takes a non-reimbursable or incomplete meal, a fee will be charged regardless of student eligibility. Balances incurred for non-reimbursable or incomplete meals the household is responsible for paying.

A La Carte Charges

A la Carte transactions may not be charged to a student's meal account with insufficient funds to cover the purchase. This applies to students at CEP and non-CEP schools. During the a la carte transaction the total balances must be paid to the ILTexas Cashier.

Student Account Restriction Form

The International Leadership of Texas (ILTexas) Child Nutrition Department understands that you may want to limit your student's daily spending in the cafeteria. This form is required only if a parent and/or guardian wish to request restrictions on their student's meal account. All students use a personal identification number to purchase meals and/or a la carte items. Students can use cash or funds from their meal account to purchase an extra meal, entrees, and side items. If you would like to place spending limits or restrictions on your student's meal account, complete and return Student Account Restriction Form to your campus Cashier or e-mail this form to childnutrition@iltexas.org. To access the Student Account Restriction Form, go to <https://www.iltexas.org/families/child-nutrition>. Spending limits and/or restrictions will not be removed until a parent or guardian submits a written request.

Payment

Parents and legal guardians may make payments to their student's meal account and monitor their child's meal balances by contacting their ILTexas Cashier or by logging into <http://www.myschoolbucks.com/>. By using My School Bucks a fee may apply. You will have the opportunity to review any fees and cancel if you choose before you are charged.

The Child Nutrition Department has payment methods without a service fee: by paying cash or check to our ILTexas Cashier. If further assistance is needed reach out to the Child Nutrition Department by visiting this website <https://www.iltexas.org/families/child-nutrition> or emailing childnutrition@iltexas.org.

End-of-Year Excess Balance

At the end of the academic school year, families have the option to donate any leftover funds remaining in their student's school meal account. Families that do not donate will have their full account balance carried over into the next school year or have the option to request a refund. Excess balances for students who graduate or have departed will be refunded upon parent request. In addition, students excess balance must be reported to the Texas Comptroller's Office and managed as required by Texas law if the balance is not returned to the student or donated by consent of the parent or guardian once the student has left the school district.



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Outstanding Student Debt

Parents will receive weekly notifications via email, text, or phone when their student(s) has/have a negative balance. Campuses print negative balance letters every week and distribute them to the students.

Payments for Meals When a Student Has a Negative Balance

When a student has a negative account balance, ILTexas must allow the student to purchase a reimbursable meal with any funds the student has on hand. Additionally, ILTexas cannot require the student to pay any remaining funds (overpayment) from the meal purchase to the student's existing negative account balance.

Adult Meal Charges

Adult (Parents, Teachers, Campus Staff, Administration, Custodial, and Lawn Care) meals cannot be charged to a student's meal account.

ILTexas Board Policy: No Meal Charge Policy During May and June

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear guidelines regarding student meal charges during May and June. This policy supports end-of-year financial reconciliation and ensures the proper closing of student meal accounts.

Policy Statement

Beginning **May 1, 2024**, and continuing through the end of each academic school year, **students will not be permitted to charge meals that cause a negative balance**. This policy applies to all ILTexas campuses and is intended to facilitate accurate year-end accounting.

Meal Pricing

- **Breakfast:**
 - \$2.20
- **Lunch:**
 - \$3.80

Payment Options

Parents and legal guardians are encouraged to ensure that student meal accounts are adequately funded. Payments may be made by:

- Logging into www.myschoolbucks.com
- Sending cash or check with the student to school

Parent/Legal Guardian Responsibility



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It is the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian to monitor and maintain a positive balance in their student's meal account. If a student does not have sufficient funds and is not eligible for free meals, parents must provide a packed lunch from home.

Acknowledgment

We appreciate the cooperation of all ILTexas families in adhering to this policy. Ensuring that students have access to meals is a shared responsibility, and timely account management is essential.

Child Nutrition Department Contact Information

- IL Texas Child Nutrition website: <https://www.iltexas.org/families/child-nutrition>
- Email: childnutrition@iltexas.org

Non – Discrimination Statement

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, 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/ad-3027.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 This institution is an equal opportunity provider.