



TMSA Public Charter Schools School Nutrition Meal Charge Policy

Effective Date: August 12, 2025

TMSA Public Charter Schools is committed to ensuring that all students have access to nutritious meals each school day, regardless of their ability to pay at the time of service. This policy outlines procedures for managing student meal charges, communicating with families, and ensuring repayment in a manner that is equitable, respectful, and fully compliant with USDA and National School Lunch Program (NSLP) regulations across all TMSA campuses.

Meal Charging Policy

- **Elementary and middle school students** may charge reimbursable meals (breakfast and/or lunch) up to a **maximum of \$10.00** on their meal account.
- **High school students and adults** are **not permitted** to charge meals or à la carte items.
- **À la carte items, second meals, and snacks** must be **paid for at the time of purchase** and cannot be charged to a meal account.
- **No student will be denied a reimbursable meal** due to insufficient funds, nor will meals be withheld as a form of disciplinary action, in accordance with **FNS Instruction 791-1**.

- Once a student exceeds the charge limit, a **USDA-compliant alternative meal** will be provided **at no cost** until the balance is paid or a payment plan is established.

Typical Examples of USDA-Compliant Alternative Meals

The following options meet federal reimbursement requirements and ensure students receive nutritious meals while maintaining their dignity:

- Sunbutter and jelly sandwich, apple slices, carrot sticks, and milk
- Cheese sandwich, canned fruit, and vegetable juice
- Cold entrée box with whole grain crackers, protein, fruit, and milk

Note: Alternative meals will be served discreetly to prevent identification or stigma.

- **Outstanding meal account balances** may affect a student's participation in certain school activities at the **discretion of school administration**.

Notifications and Communication

- Families will be notified of low or negative meal account balances through **email, phone calls, software notifications, printed letters, or other school communication platforms**.
- Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to monitor and prepay student meal accounts using the district's online payment system.
- A printed copy of this policy will be shared with families annually and made available at the start of each school year.

Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications

- Families are encouraged to submit a **Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application annually**.
- Applications are available online and in each campus front office.
- Parents/guardians remain responsible for all meal charges incurred prior to application approval.

Repayment and Assistance

- **Unpaid meal charges** are expected to be resolved within **five school days** of notification.
- Families facing financial hardship should contact the **School Nutrition Office** to discuss assistance options or establish a payment plan.
- **TMSA employees** with outstanding charges related to their children's meals may have balances deducted through **payroll** if necessary.

Compliance and Recordkeeping

- School Nutrition Managers will **generate and review daily reports** of charged and alternative meals.
- Reports will be shared with school administration to ensure proper communication and documentation.
- All records will be maintained in accordance with **federal and state audit requirements**.

TMSA Public Charter Schools is committed to protecting the dignity of all students while ensuring fiscal accountability within its school nutrition program. We appreciate the cooperation of our families, staff, and school leaders in supporting these efforts.