

# Pinellas County Schools Meal Alternative Procedure

Important Notice | Starting January 2026

## Effective January 2026

Starting in January 2026, Pinellas County Schools will introduce a Meal Alternative procedure for students with negative lunch balances at Non-CEP (Community Eligibility Provision) sites. This policy is designed to ensure that all students continue to receive nutritious meals while managing meal account balances responsibly.

## What You Need to Know

- **Meal Charging Limit:** Students are permitted to charge up to five (5) meals without having funds available in their lunch accounts.
- **Meal Alternative After Limit:** Once a student reaches the five-meal limit, the main entrée will be substituted with a Turkey & Cheese Sandwich. However, students will still receive fruit, a vegetable, juice, and milk to ensure a balanced meal.
- **Continued Breakfast Accessibility:** Breakfast will remain free for all students, ensuring they start their day with a healthy meal.
- **Free/Reduced Meal Assurance:** Students who are approved for Free/Reduced meals will not be impacted by this procedure.

## Applying for Free/Reduced Meal Benefits

Households are encouraged to apply for Free/Reduced priced meals by visiting [www.myschoolapps.com](http://www.myschoolapps.com). All applications are confidential, and students approved for Free/Reduced benefits will not be impacted by the meal alternative, even if a balance is still on the student account. To check balances or deposit money onto student accounts please visit [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com).

## Questions?

If you have any questions or require further assistance, please contact Food & Nutrition Services at 727-547-7100. Your cooperation and understanding are greatly appreciated as we implement this new policy to support our students' nutritional needs.