Frequently Asked Questions about Secondary School Meals

How much do student school meals cost?

Fargo Public Schools (FPS) participates in the USDA's School Lunch Program. This program provides monetary reimbursement from the Federal Government to the school district for every meal served. These meals are generally referred to as "reimbursable". This funding helps cover the cost of serving the meal so that it can be provided to students at a reduced price. New prices are determined each school year based on anticipated costs. The district does not make a profit selling school meals. FPS current meal prices.

Should I apply for Fees Assistance and Benefits even though I think our household income is too high to qualify for benefits?

This application form is also known as Free and Reduced-Price Meals Application. Households may apply for financial assistance to pay for school meals by submitting this application. For students qualifying for reduced price meals, breakfast and lunch are free (the state of ND covers the household fee). Students qualifying for free meals receive school meals at no charge.

- Receive waived (cancelled) fees related to attending school such as activity fees, band rentals, exam fees, application fees, and more.
- Increases funding to the district for educational programs through Title 1 funding, foundation aid, e-rate for technology grants, and others.

For more information on financial assistance for school meal programs: https://www.fna.usda.gov/schoolmeals.

Each student is allowed one reimbursable breakfast and lunch (at the above price) per school day. Additional meals are priced at the advertised "adult" meal price. Submit application

What menu options are available to students choosing a reimbursable school meal?

The USDA has established guidelines for meals to qualify for reimbursement. These guidelines also apply to meals served as part of the Free and Reduced-Price assistance program. The guidelines require students to take at least three of the meal components offered at lunch. Of the three or more components chosen, at least one serving must be a fruit or vegetable. For breakfast, students must take at least three of the four meal components offered and must have a minimum of one serving of fruit.

For the school meal price, students may choose to take all meal components (four at breakfast, five at lunch) and two servings each of fruits and vegetables.

Two components may be combined in one offering. For example, a slice of breakfast pizza with eggs, cheese, and crust provides a meat/meat alternative component and a grain component. The slice of pizza would count as two components.

What are “extras” or “a la carte” items?

Menu items that don’t fall within the guidelines of a reimbursable meal do not qualify for funding from the Federal Government. Therefore, the school must charge the customer the full price necessary to cover the costs of serving that item. Charging the full price for individual items, called “a la carte,” can happen in a few different instances.

For example, a reimbursable lunch meal includes up to one serving of milk, one serving of meat/meat alternative, and one serving of grain along with two servings of fruit and two servings of vegetables. Any servings taken that exceed these guidelines are considered extra and are charged at full or a la carte price.

In another example, if a student doesn’t take enough of the required components for a reimbursable meal, they will be asked to put additional items on their tray. Students are not forced to take or eat food. However, if a student declines to add the necessary items to their tray to comply with the guidelines for a reimbursable meal, the items on the tray will be charged at the a la carte price.

In this last example, middle and high school cafeterias offer extra food items that are always only available at a la carte pricing. These items cannot be counted as a component of a reimbursable school meal. Extra items offered meet the Smart Snack nutrition guidelines and can be healthy additions to meals when eaten in moderation.

How do students pay for “extras” or “a la carte” items?

Students who choose to purchase these items will be required to provide their student ID number so that the purchase can be recorded. Students must have funds available either in their lunch account or in cash at the time of purchase. Purchases cannot be charged and paid for later. The district cannot enforce guardian preferences for restricting a student’s purchases. Guardians should discuss spending expectations with their students.

How can I manage my student’s lunch account?

Balances may be reviewed by logging into the Infinite Campus, Campus Parent portal and clicking on SchoolPay. Through SchoolPay, parents may check balances, deposit money into student accounts electronically, and set up low balance notifications. Electronic payments can be made using a credit or debit card, which includes a processing fee. To avoid online credit card processing

fees by adding money to their student's school lunch account using cash or a check. Payments may be brought to the school office or sent with your student in a sealed envelope clearly labeled with the student's full name and lunch account information. Checks should be made payable to “FPS Nutrition Services” and include the student’s full name and lunch account information. These payment methods ensure that the full amount is applied to your student's meal account without any additional processing charges. If you have questions about payment options or your student's account balance, please contact the school office or call the Nutrition Services Department at 701-446-1152.

Parents are expected to discuss any spending expectations with their child/ren.

Can I request that the school stop my student from making food choices and/or purchases?

Parents are expected to discuss expectations for any limits on food choices and purchases along with spending limits. Nutrition Services staff cannot enforce requests for spending limits as this cannot be discussed privately with the students during meal service. Students who need accommodation due to medical or behavioral circumstances can make a request through the school counselor (behavioral) or by completing the Special Menu Request Form (medical) available on the Nutrition Services FPS webpage.

What should students be encouraged to do for a healthy balanced meal at the best value?

Parents can encourage students to start with a reimbursable meal and take advantage of all the components and servings included. This will ensure students are exposed to healthy fruits and vegetables with enough food to fuel them throughout the day.

For more information on the USDA National School Lunch Program, including requirements for menu offerings and portion sizes, visit the Food and Nutrition Administration website.