

PAYMENT OF SCHOOL MEAL ACCOUNTS

School Meal Charges and Accounts

Under the Community Eligibility Program or CEP, all students are eligible to receive a free breakfast and lunch. As such the only money exchanged will be for ala cart items. All ala cart items are cash only and there are no student credit breakfast or lunch accounts.

1. It shall be the intent of the District to prepare and offer wholesome, well-balanced meals to all pupils in our schools.
2. The price of lunches will be one which will cover the cost of operating the Food Service Program. The Program should be operated to be self-sustaining and self-supporting. The Food Service Budget, which includes lunch prices, shall be approved by the Board.
3. The District shall provide Free and Reduced Price Lunches following the guidelines as published by the Division of Food and Nutrition Services of the Pennsylvania Department of Education for all students meeting eligibility criteria.
4. The District prohibits any student to be denied a school food program meal to any student who requests one but does not have the money to pay for the meal at the time of service or in his or her meal account. Schools may only withhold meals from a student if they receive written direction from a parent/guardian.
5. Communication about the amount of the student's meal debt must be directed to the parent/guardian, not to the student. This communication will occur once the student owes money for five or more meals. The District must then make at least two attempts to reach the parent/guardian.
6. The District cannot publicly identify or stigmatize students because they have a school meal debt.
7. The District cannot direct a student to discard a meal that has been served to them because they cannot pay for it at the time of service or because they have an existing school meal debt.

8. To prevent students from being charged for meals when they may be eligible for free meals, PDE recommends schools perform a direct certification match weekly using the PrimeroEdge system. Since the list is updated weekly and students are routinely added to the Direct Certification list throughout the school year, this should ensure that all direct certified students are being identified for free meals.
9. If a student is not on the Direct Certification list, the school may assist the family with applying for free or reduced-price meals.

Collection of Unpaid Meal Charges

1. When a student owes money for five (5) or more school food program meals, the district shall make at least two (2) attempts to contact the student's parent/guardian and shall provide the application for free/reduced-price school meal benefits to the parent/guardian to apply for benefits under federal school meal programs. The district may offer assistance to parents/guardians with applying for free/reduced-price school meal benefits.[\[3\]](#)[\[20\]](#)[\[21\]](#)
2. Communications regarding a low balance or money owed by a student for school meals shall be made to the student's parent/guardian.[\[3\]](#)
3. The Principal's office will continue to send the end of the year obligation letter to parents of unpaid bills. Report cards will not be held for cafeteria obligations.
4. The Superintendent's office will send a letter on June 30, notifying parents of the warning to proceed to the court system and additional fees if obligations are not met.

Adopted November 18, 2019