

Access to School Meals and Other Food Service Items

Parents and guardians must plan for their child to have sufficient access to food at school on each school day and must actively monitor and manage their child's school food service account. In order to help parents and guardians meet these responsibilities and to ensure that school families are reasonably informed about the food-service options that are available to students, the District has established the following guidelines regarding food-service charges and student access to food at school:

1. A student will always be permitted to select and receive one of the standard school meal options if either of the following apply:
 - a. The District has determined that the student is currently eligible to receive free meals at school;
or
 - b. The student has sufficient prepaid funds in his/her food service account, or enough money in hand, to pay for the meal on the day the meal is purchased.
2. When a student purchases a school meal or any other food-service items, the general rule is that payment is due no later than at the time of service. However, the District's food service account system normally allows a student to charge up to \$5.00 in his/her account as a negative balance before the District will take steps to restrict the student's food choices. The primary purpose of allowing a limited and temporary negative balance is to prevent an unexpected interruption in meal service on a day that a student inadvertently has insufficient funds available. In addition, the District may deny the privilege of charging items to a student who repeatedly establishes a negative account balance that is not promptly repaid upon notice of the amount owed.
3. Students who are not eligible for free school meals, who do not have money to pay for their food, who have reached their limit on unrestricted charges, and who do not bring food from home will be permitted to charge to their account only a low-cost, federally-qualifying meal that is specified by the District and that is being offered at the particular meal service.
4. If a student who purchases meals is not able to pay for his/her food on a particular day and is also ineligible to charge or receive a District-provided meal as described above, the student will be informed that he/she cannot receive meals or other items from the school food service program. The District's goal is to make multiple attempts to contact a student's parent or guardian before the point at which the student is denied access to school-prepared food during a school meal period.

Negative Account Balances and Collection Procedures

A negative balance in a student food service account is a debt that is owed by the student's parent or guardian (or, if applicable, by an adult student). The District does not charge interest or impose a monetary penalty for past-due amounts owed in a student's food service account.

Once a student's account has a negative balance, the District will make an initial and follow-up attempt to collect the debt by providing the student's parent or guardian with notice (e.g., by mail, email, telephone, or similar methods) of the amount owed. Payment is due immediately upon notice. If these attempts are not successful, a school official will attempt to make a person-to-person telephone contact

or schedule an in-person meeting with a parent or guardian. The District and the parent or guardian may discuss payment plan options.

If a negative balance still has not been paid after the collection efforts described in the previous paragraph, parents and guardians should be aware of the following:

1. At its discretion, the District may continue to pursue collection efforts.
2. Debt in a student food service account is not automatically discharged, forgiven, or reduced at the end of the school year or due to a change in a student's enrollment status (e.g., graduates, transfers, drops-out, etc.).
3. Debts owed to the District's food service program may result in the denial of certain school-related privileges in the same manner that applies to other past-due school fees and charges.

Payments and Account Management

For any meals and other food service items (i.e., food or drinks) that are available for purchase and that a student is not entitled to receive for free, it is ultimately the responsibility of each student's parent or guardian to pay for the items that their child receives.

The District offers an online system that a parent or guardian can use to monitor and manage each child's school food service account, including making payments. The District strongly encourages school families to establish and regularly fund a prepaid school food service account for each student in the household.

In addition to using the online account system to make payments, a person who needs or wishes to make a payment for a student's meals or food service account may (1) present a payment in person using cash or check during normal school hours, (2) bring cash to the main office of the student's school in order to pay for a student's meal or other food service items on the actual day of service, (3) provide a student with cash to pay for items on the day of service, or (4) request consideration of other methods by contacting the main office.

A person making a payment to a student food service account who wishes to designate specific amounts as either repayment of a debt or prepayment of future charges should contact the main office to establish how the specific payment should be applied to the account.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement:

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Esta institución es un proveedor que ofrece igualdad de oportunidades.