

District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties

Student Meal Accounts and Charge Policy

Student Meal Accounts

It is strongly encouraged that parents/guardians make meal payments in advance.

We encourage all households to complete a Free and Reduced Meal Application. This can be done online at <https://www.lunchapplication.com/>. Assistance may be available and eligible recipients will receive the regular school lunch at a free or reduced cost. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the Director of Student Nutrition at 803-476-8153.

Meal Charge Policy

Students will be allowed to charge one regular breakfast and one regular lunch meal per day. Extra sales are not allowed to be charged.

No meals allowed to be charged for the following: adults, visitors or staff members.

- Parents/Guardians will be notified weekly of students who have negative balances by phone and email. Letters will be sent home two times a month for students who continue to have a negative balance.
- Once the student's account reaches \$15.00 of unpaid meals the student's Principal will send a letter showing charges and explaining that the debt can be turned over to a collection agency and the State of South Carolina's Department of Revenue for garnishing wages and/or income tax refund at the end of the school year if debt is not settled. The parent/guardian will also be responsible for the meal charges. (See Alternative Meal Policy below)
- Students who owe \$5.00 or more can only purchase extra sale items if they make a payment on their account of the same amount as purchased item. Example: student purchases an ice cream for \$1.00, and he/she must also pay \$1.00 on their negative balance.

We are not required by law to provide a meal to a student without payment. We strongly discourage meal charges, but we understand that an occasional emergency makes it necessary.

Student Account Refunds

- Parent/Guardian of students that are graduating or moving out of the district, may request a refund of student's meal account money from the student's school cafeteria manager. Once the manager verifies all meal fees have been collected, a request by cafeteria manager will be sent to the district office for a refund. The refund will be mailed to the student's home address, unless parent provides a new address at the time of requesting refund. Funds left in the student's meal account will carry over to next year. Funds not requested by parent at the time the student graduates or leaves District will be forfeited to the Student Nutrition Department at the end of following school year.

Student Accounts with Unpaid Balances

- Student accounts with negative balances remaining at the end of the school year will be paid off by the student's Principal. The Principal will use money from their school account to cover the balance. The debt will still be owed to the Principal's school until collected.

Meal Policy

The meal that is served is the District's published menu that meets all the requirements for a USDA reimbursable meal **(an alternative meal is not to be served in District Five of Lexington and Richland Counties)**.

Once a student reaches the District's maximum amount for meals charged (-\$15.00), the Parent/Guardian will continue to be responsible for meals served to the student.

Instructions and guidelines for serving an Alternative Meal

1. Student Nutrition staff notifies the Principal by email any student that has reached the District's maximum amount of (-\$15.00) for charged meals and carbon copies the Director of Student Nutrition. A payment plan to clear debt by the end of current school year will be developed. Students with an approved payment plan will not be reported to the Principal.
2. Principal must mail a letter home giving the parent one week to make arrangements to clear the negative balance and notify the Student Nutrition Manager. Principals should also try to make contact by phone and/or email the day the letter is to be mailed. Format of letter and content will be provided by the Student Nutrition Department.
3. After the time stated in letter has expired and the parent has not made arrangements to pay debt, the Principal will contact the Student Nutrition Manager by email with student's name.
4. Students cannot be made to sit at a different table than their classmates. All District Five staff involved must make sure that we do not embarrass the student and we do not overtly identify the student. Only students that are on paid or reduced status can be served a Meal, they are not eligible for the premium meal (Smart Mouth Pizza or Supreme Chicken Sandwiches). Student Nutrition staff should never should take a tray of food away and exchange for published meal.
5. Once the account has been settled or a payment plan has been approved by Student Nutrition manager the alternative meals will be stopped. If parent fails to follow the approved payment plan and the student's account is still over the negative \$15.00, the maximum charge amount allowed by District, only the published meal will to be served.