

JACKSON PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

UNPAID MEAL CHARGE PROCEDURES

Purpose

It is the goal of the Jackson Parish School Board's Child Nutrition Program to provide nourishing meals to our students to help fuel their learning in the classroom. However, the Child Nutrition Program operates as a self-funded entity, like any other business, and unpaid meal charges place a large financial burden on the Child Nutrition Program.

The intent of the procedures:

- To be transparent with our families on the district's procedures for handling unpaid meal charges.
- To encourage parent/guardian's responsibility of meal payments and charges.
- To outline the actions the district will take to implement and enforce the procedures and collect outstanding debts.

Although, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) does not require schools to serve meals to full-pay or reduced eligible students without payment. The Jackson Parish School Board wishes to not deny meals to our students. Outlined below are the actions the Child Nutrition Program will make to enforce the meal charge procedures.

Purchasing Meals in the Cafeteria

Each student enrolled in the Jackson Parish School District has a cafeteria account created by the Child Nutrition Program. After an account is created, the student receives an ID number to use when a meal is served to the student. Money for meal purchases can be prepaid to a student's account electronically at www.myschoolbucks.com or by sending cash or check in an envelope, marked with the student's name and ID number, to your child's cafeteria. If a check is for more than one child's account, each child's name and the amount to be credited to each child's account should be noted. All checks should be made payable to the school cafeteria (example: JHHS cafeteria). As students come through the line to receive meals in the cafeterias, they will be serviced according to this procedure.

Full Pay and Reduced Status Students

Students in all grade levels will be allowed to charge the equivalent of two weeks for regular meals on their cafeteria account. Once the charge limit is met an alternate meal will be offered to the student until the debt is paid in full. All charges made on a student's account, whether for regular or alternate meals, remain the parents' responsibility.

Grade K-12 Students: When a student comes to the cashier in the lunch line and has exceeded the charge limit (two weeks) they will be offered an alternate meal which is charged to the student's cafeteria account at the regular price. The alternate meal charges will continue to accumulate and are the parents' responsibility.

Alternate Meal

Once the charge limit has been reached an alternate meal will be served. Alternate meals will consist of nutritionally equivalent meal components, for example: whole grain cereal, choice of fruit, juice and milk at breakfast and whole grain cheese and/or meat sandwich, choice of fruit, vegetable, and milk at lunch. Because the alternate meal is nutritionally equivalent to the regular menu items, the meal will be charged at the normal rate to the student's cafeteria account. Food allergies will be accommodated.

Upon the third (3rd) instance during a single school year of the same elementary school child being denied a regular meal during school hours, the School Board shall contact the office of community services within the Department of Social Services to report the failure of the parent or guardian to provide for regular meals which has resulted in repeated denials of regular meals during school hours.

Free Status Students

The eligibility for free and reduced price meal benefits starts the date an application is approved in our system. Until that time, parents are responsible for providing a packed meal or lunch money for their students. If meals are charged to a student's account before an application is approved, those debts cannot be forgiven, per Title 7 CFR 245.6. The debt will remain on the account until the parent pays it in full. Once a student is eligible for free meals, even with meal account debt, they will be offered the regular menu items.

Collection of Meal Debt

The Child Nutrition Program will use the following methods to notify families and collect debt:

1. Postal mail
2. Email
3. Individual Phone calls

For those who abuse the meal charge procedures and accumulate an excessive amount of meal charges, a meeting with the principal and/or the Child Nutrition Program Supervisor will be initiated.

The meal account debt is considered a school fee and remains with the student throughout his/her enrollment at Jackson Parish Schools. The meal account debt will also roll over and accumulate each school year until it is paid in full. All outstanding charges must be paid before withdrawing or graduating.

NSF (Non- Sufficient Funds) Checks

If a NSF check is received, the person writing the check will be contacted by the cafeteria manager regarding payment. No checks will be accepted for payment of meals until the outstanding check plus fees are paid in full. A second NSF check by the same person/account will result in all meals being paid in cash or money order for the rest of the school year.

End of Year Balances

No checks will be accepted for payment of meals after May 1st of the school year. However, parent may still pay online using www.myschoolbucks.com. Students who owe balances May 1st must have balances paid in full or they will not be allowed to purchase meals during the last weeks of school until the debt is paid in full.

"This institution is an equal opportunity provider."