

## **Student / Meal Account**

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) requires school food authorities to establish written administrative guidelines and procedures for meal charges.

The East Porter County School Corporation will adhere to the following meal charge procedure.

Student meal accounts are set up and maintained through the school cafeteria. The cafeteria manager is responsible for maintaining each student meal account.

All cafeteria purchases are to be prepaid before meal service begins. Funds can be deposited into the student's account using a credit card or ACH check through the school corporation eFunds on-line payment system located on the corporation web site or by going to <https://eps.mvpbanking.com/cgi-bin/efs/login.pl?access=55932>. There is a transaction fee to add funds to the account. Parents can receive an e-mail alerting them to a low balance. There is no cost for this service. Receiving the low-balance e-mail will prevent students from having to charge meals or receive an alternate meal. Parents can sign up for this service through Skyward and through eFunds. In Skyward, the low balance alert is set at \$3.00. In eFunds, parents can set the low balance alert at any amount. Instructions on how to sign up for this e-mail service are included with this policy. Cash can be received at the school cafeteria cash register during lunch time. Checks can be received at the register after all meals have been served so that the line is not held up during lunch service.

All student accounts are considered "Money in Trust" and held in fund 8400. The student account is balanced monthly through the East Porter County School Corporation accounting system. Student funds remain in the student's account during the summer months and move from one grade to the next grade level for startup in the following school year. Student funds can be transferred into a sibling account with written or verbal approval from the parent/guardian.

Cash refunds cannot be issued through a school lunch cash register. All refunds must be processed through the student account refund procedure. (see below for refund procedure)

### **Student account charging procedure**

From time to time, students deplete the money in their cafeteria account. To ensure that students continue to be able to eat meals at school, students will be permitted to charge a specified dollar amount. No charges, however, will be permitted the last week of the school year. Adults may not charge.

Students who are not enrolled in the free/reduced cost lunch program can charge up to \$7.00 for lunch, Breakfast may not be charged. Students who are enrolled in the reduced cost lunch program may charge up to \$1.50. These amounts will provide student with meals for approximately two (2) to three (3) days. Charging will be permitted as long as the student and parent establish and maintain a good credit history or making payments on the cafeteria account. No students, including those who qualify for free meals, may charge a la carte item (i.e., cereal bars, bottled water, ice cream, etc.). Only a reimbursable meal may be charged.

If a student purchases an ala carte item, the remaining charge will go towards the student's negative balance.

If the student's account exceeds the \$7.00 or \$1.50 amount, the student will not be able to charge any further meals. The student will be offered a reimbursable alternate meal, such as a cheeses sandwich, fruit, vegetable, and a milk for \$1.00. This cost will be added to the student's debt. No student will go without a lunch meal unless the student refuses to accept the alternate meal. If a student inadvertently receives a regular meal, the tray will not be taken from the student.

If a student repeatedly comes to school with no lunch and no money, food service employees must report this to Child Protective Services and the school principal as this may be a sign of abuse or neglect.

The cafeteria managers will attempt to contact parents either via e-mail or with a telephone call to inform the parent of a negative balance. However, monitoring a cafeteria balance is the responsibility of the parent.

All accounts must be settled at the end of each semester. Parents of students who have a negative balance will be contacted in writing approximately five (5) days before the end of each semester. An e-mail message to a parent will suffice as written notification. Negative balances of more than \$5.00 not paid in full five (5) days before the end of each semester will force the School Corporation to take action to collect unpaid funds by means of collection agencies, small claims court, or any other legal method deemed necessary by the School Corporation. If the amount owed is uncollectable, the debt cannot be an expense of the school food service account and must be covered by non-Federal funds.

If there is a financial situation that is affecting a parent's ability to provide lunch money, the parent is strongly encouraged to contact the school principal or the food service director. All of our schools participate in the national school lunch program, and parents may be able to qualify for financial assistance for meals for their children.

Students who graduate or withdraw from the School Corporation and have \$5.00 or more left in their cafeteria account will be notified by food services at the time the student leaves the School Corporation. Students who graduate or withdraw from the School Corporation and have less than \$5.00 in their cafeteria account, the money will be transferred to the cafeteria donation fund. Parents/guardian will be given the option to transfer the funds to another student account, school lunch donation fund or to receive a refund. If no response is received within ten (10) days the student's cafeteria account will close and the funds will no longer be available. Unclaimed remaining balances will be transferred to the school lunch donation fund.

### **Student account refund procedure**

Refunds are only given when a student is no longer enrolled in the East Porter County School Corporation. Instead of refunding the balance, student funds can be donated to the school lunch donation fund with written parent/guardian approval. This fund is used at the discretion of the cafeteria manager for students who have experienced unforeseen hardship or for student lunch accounts that have been deemed uncollectable debt.

Funds that are abandoned in a student account and are not claimed by the parent or guardian will then be receipted into the student lunch donation account. A student lunch account can only be considered abandoned if the cafeteria manager has made two unsuccessful attempts to refund the student account balance prior to the beginning of the next school year.

1st attempt to refund will be by e-mail to the last known e-mail address on file or by phone if an e-mail address is not available. The e-mail will include an attached claim form requiring the parent/guardian to sign and return to the school for refund.

2nd attempt to refund will be by letter to the last known address on file. Letter will include a claim form requiring the parent/guardian to sign and return to the school for refund.

To claim a refund the parent must sign an accounts payable voucher form number 523 (claim form) with the following information. The cafeteria manager will provide the claim form to the administration office for refund:

- Name of the school cafeteria authorizing refund
- Signature of Cafeteria Manager authorizing the refund
- Payee name and address
- Student name and grade
- Date claim is filled out
- Payee Signature authorizing the refund
- Documentation of refund
- Refund accounting number 8400.31901.876.0000

A refund can only be issued after a completed claim form is approved by the school board at a school board meeting. Refund checks will be mailed to last known address of the parent/guardian.

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