

FAQ's – School Nutrition Program 2017-18

Breakfast reminder – all breakfasts must include a fruit component. If a student does not take a fruit at breakfast, the items on the tray will be charged at a la carte prices. This applies to all students, including those on the free/reduced program. This is a requirement of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

Q. What do the charging levels mean?

A. The charging level indicates your preference on meal charges:

- **Level I – One lunch and one breakfast per day.** Only one breakfast and one lunch may be charged. No extra servings are allowed.
- **Level II – Meals, plus extra servings.** Students may charge extras, such as entrees and other items that are prepared in the kitchen or served by the cooks, including milk.

Note – students are never allowed to charge any ala carte snack items that may be available at the check out counter, with the exception of bottled water and yogurt, and only if level II is specified.

Q. What if I have special requests?

A. Please let us know if you have any special restrictions or allowances you would like, such as extra milk only. We can notate the account. **Please make sure your children know what you have indicated.**

Q. What if my child charges an extra when you specified level I?

A. Our lunch line employees will make every attempt to help your child stay within the levels, but extras will be charged to the account if necessary. If a student has already put the item on their tray, we cannot put the food back to serve. **It is the student's responsibility to only charge within the level you set. Please make sure your children know what they are allowed to charge.**

FAQ's - Free/Reduced Meal Program

Q. What does the Free/Reduced Program cover?

A. ONE free or reduced meal for breakfast and ONE free or reduced meal for lunch.

- Students must take a qualified meal to receive the meal at the free or reduced price.
- A qualified meal consists of 3 food groups – one of which must be ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.
- An easy way – make sure your children takes at least three different items – for example, an entrée, ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and a milk. Milk is not required, but can count as a component.

Q. What happens if my child does not take a qualified meal?

A. Your account will be charged a la carte prices for the items taken, even if you are on the Free/Reduced Program.

Q. Can the cashier remind my child on the Free/Reduced Program to take a qualified meal to avoid being charged a la carte?

A. No. Free/Reduced status is confidential information and the lunch employees do not know your child's status. **It is up to you to make sure your child knows the guidelines.**

Q. Can my children eat 2nd meals at the free or reduced price?

A. No – 2nd meals are not allowed at the free or reduced price, and will be charged at the full 2nd meal price.

Q. What about extra servings or second entrées?

A. Extra entrées, or extra helpings are not considered part of the qualified meal, and are not covered by the Free/Reduced Program. These will be charged to your account at a la carte prices.

Meal Charging Policy

In accordance with state and federal law, the Southeast Warren Community School District adopts the following policy to ensure school district employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. The policy seeks to allow students to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day, prevent the overt identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals, and maintain the financial integrity of the nonprofit school nutrition program.

Payment of Meals

Students have use of a meal account. When the balance reaches \$0.00 a student may charge no more than \$10.00 to an individual account or \$20 to a family account. When an account reaches this limit, a student shall not be allowed to charge further meals or a la carte items until the negative account balance is paid. Money may be added to student accounts electronically through the online lunch account system or by check or cash when going through the lunch line.

Students who qualify for free meals shall never be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from previous purchases. Students with outstanding meal charge debt shall be allowed to purchase a meal if the student pays for the meal when it is received.

Employees may use a charge account for meals. When the balance reaches \$0.00 an employee may charge no more than \$10.00 to an individual account or \$20 to a family account. When an account reaches this limit, an employee shall not be allowed to charge further meals or a la carte items until the negative account balance is paid.

Negative Account Balances

The school district will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low. Additionally, the school district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. The school district will coordinate communications with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Families will be notified by the automated lunch account system when their account reaches a threshold based on the number of students in the account and their Free/Reduced status. These warnings are sent in advance of an account reaching a negative balance, and continues until the account is paid. At the elementary buildings, notes will be sent home once a week to families with negative accounts. Negative balances of more than \$10.00 for an individual account or \$20.00 for a family account not paid prior to May 15th of each school year will be turned over to the superintendent or superintendent's designee for collection. Options may include: collection agencies, small claims court, or any other legal method permitted by law.

Communication of the Policy

The policy and supporting information regarding meal charges shall be provided in writing to:

- All households at or before the start of each school year;
- Students and families who transfer into the district, at time of transfer; and
- All staff responsible for enforcing any aspect of the policy.

Records of how and when the policy and supporting information was communicated to households and staff will be retained.

The superintendent may develop an administrative process to implement this policy.