



Olympia CUSD 16 Meal Charging Process and Procedure-

Our intent:

- The Child Nutrition Program is self-sufficient and relies on payments, in addition to federal reimbursements, to maintain the level of service provided and financial stability of the program. It is the expectation that families will work with us to keep accounts in good standing and be accountable for meal charges accrued by their child(ren). We want meal time to be a positive experience for all students and will serve every child a well-balanced meal when they enter the line and request one. Because hunger is an impediment to learning, no child will be denied a school meal unless directed to by the child's parent/guardian

Student accounts and parent notifications:

- The goal is for student accounts to remain positive
- All households are accountable for meal charges
- All account balances, positive or negative, carry over to the next school year
- Parents will be notified automatically of low balance and negative balance accounts through automated email messages

To support families in maintaining positive balances the Child Nutrition Program will:

Provide accessible school meal deposit and payment options by:

- Accepting payment (cash or check in the main office) at the school, sent with the student or electronically through Family Access in Skyward. There are no cash or check payments accepted at the register in the cafeteria.

Notify parents directly of low and unpaid account balances using the district's communications system through:

- Automated low balance (any account that is negative) email notifications (Wednesday afternoons)

Ensure all eligible families are certified for free and reduced-price school meals by:

- Providing school meal applications prior to the start of the school year or at the time of enrollment, as well available in each school office or online throughout the school year.

- Parents with questions or who need assistance may contact the food nutrition department.
- Regularly (monthly) utilizing data provided by the State or other school district officials to certify eligible children without application

Financial Support:

- The District will distribute, and make available, free and reduced applications to households and proactively qualify a student for free or reduced price meals through Direct Certification utilizing State systems that are available for District access.
- Applications are available in any school office or online and are accepted all year long as family financial situations may change at any time.
- All students transferring into the District mid-year are searched in the State Direct Certification site to determine right away if they are eligible for benefits.

Charging:

- Child Nutrition will not delay nor deny a meal due to a student having insufficient funds unless Child Nutrition has received and processed a parent/guardian request that no school meal charging be allowed.
- Students accessing meals with insufficient funds will be charged for each meal and parent/guardians notified. It will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian to pay the charge and bring the student account to a positive balance.
- A la Carte and non-student purchases cannot be charged to accounts with a negative balance.

Direct Communication with Households:

- All communication regarding unpaid meal balances will be directed to parents/guardians.

Account Balance Refunds and Unclaimed Funds:

- Account balances for a student will be carried over to the next school year. If a student is graduating or withdrawing with a positive account balance, a refund request may be submitted.

Collecting Unpaid Meal Debt:

- The Child Nutrition Program will monitor unpaid account balances and work with families to understand the child and parents' situation in order to develop solutions to unpaid debt. The District will make reasonable efforts to collect delinquent (overdue) unpaid meal charges and will coordinate communications with families to resolve the charges. Meal account balances carry over year after year until paid.