

**MPS Culinary & Wellness Services Department: Policy and Procedure**  
**Business Services**  
**School Meals Charge Policy**

**Policy**

To ensure that all students receive healthy and nutritious meals through Minneapolis Culinary and Wellness Services and that district families, students and employees have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges.

This policy seeks to allow students to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day, to minimize identification or stigmatization of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals, and to maintain the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.

**Procedures**

- **Students not approved for free or reduced meals will pay for meals at the district's published standard rate each day**
  - Students will be allowed to charge an unlimited number of full meals (one breakfast and one lunch per day) to their account after the balance reaches zero
  - Students will not be allowed to charge a la carte items, including milk and/or second entrees
  - Student meals on a tray or otherwise served to the student will not be subsequently withdrawn from the student by the cashier or other school official, whether or not the student has an outstanding meals balance
  
- **Students approved for free or reduced meals will receive meals at no cost each day, regardless of current or previous account balance**
  - Students will not be allowed to charge a la carte items, including milk and/or second entrees
  - Student meals on a tray or otherwise served to the student will not be subsequently withdrawn from the student by the cashier or other school official, whether or not the student has an outstanding meals balance
  
- **Parents/Guardians are responsible for meal payments to the district**
  - Meals can be paid in advance via the district's electronic meal management system or via check, payable to Minneapolis Public Schools Culinary and Wellness Services
  - All school cafeterias possess computerized point of sale/cash register systems that maintain records of all monies deposited and spent for each student
  - Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a child may be without meal money on any given day
  - Any remaining funds for a particular student will be carried over to the next school year

- Refund, transfer, or donation requests may be made via the electronic system or by emailing [info.cws@mpls.k12.mn.us](mailto:info.cws@mpls.k12.mn.us) for any money remaining in the account
- If refund, transfer, or donation request is not made within three years of leaving the district, unclaimed funds will be reported and transfer to the state Commissioner of Commerce pursuant to Minn. Stat. §§ 345.41
- **Notices of low or negative balances will be sent to parents/guardians at regular intervals during the school year**
  - Minneapolis Public Schools Culinary and Wellness Service's Information Assistant is responsible for low or negative balance notices to parents/guardians
  - Notice types may include weekly phone calls, weekly emails, and monthly written letters
  - Balances owed at the end of the physical year will be referred to the District Finance Department  
*(MPS finance department may work with a collections agency to collect negative debt twice per school year - January and June).*
  - The district and/or schools within the district must not limit a student's participation in any school activities, graduation ceremonies, field trips, athletics, activity clubs, or other extracurricular activities or access to materials, technology, or other items provided to students due to an unpaid student meal balance
  - All Minneapolis Public Schools families are strongly encouraged to complete the Application for Educational Benefits