



Child Nutrition Services
Auxiliary Services
9311 Chambers Creek Road West
University Place, Washington 98467
(253) 566-5700
Fax (253) 566-5702

University Place School District Meal Charge Policy

It is the responsibility of parents or guardians to prepay for school meals; provide a breakfast or lunch from home; *or* complete an annual application establishing eligibility for free or reduced-price meals.

Child Nutrition Services allows meal charging in the event students have inadequate funds on their meal account. Please check your student's meal account balance regularly to ensure they have adequate funds in their account to purchase school meals.

In the event there are inadequate funds in their account to purchase a school meal, students are allowed to "charge" a meal purchase, putting their meal account into a negative balance. **Parents and guardians are responsible for any debt that is incurred for meals charged due to insufficient funds.** Child Nutrition Services is unable to use state or federal funds to forgive student meal debt and has established guidelines to help families manage cafeteria accounts. The following steps will be taken to communicate with families and students regarding their account:

Low Balance Notifications

Cafeteria staff will begin verbal reminders stating simply, "You will need meal money soon" to students when their meal account balance falls below \$5.00.

Negative Balance Verbal Notifications

Child Nutrition Services must prevent overtly identifying any student who is carrying a negative meal account balance. Therefore, we cannot verbally communicate this at the register. However, if a student inquires, "How much money do I have on my account?" our staff are able to respond. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to monitor meal account balances carefully. Student account balances can be looked up online through Family Access.

Negative Balance Email Notifications:

An automated email reminder will be sent out when a student's meal account balance falls below the dollar amount of one lunch at primary and intermediate schools and two lunches at the junior high and high schools. Email reminders are scheduled to go out Monday thru Friday evenings. If an email address is not available, the Nutrition Services office will make phone calls and or send out payment reminder letters.

Negative Balance Paper Notifications:

Primary cafeteria staff will print balance notification reminders every Thursday afternoon for students with negative cafeteria balances that exceed the dollar amount of 2 lunches. Notices will be addressed to "The Parent/Guardian Of: Student's Name", to be delivered to and sent home via the school office to the student's parent/guardian. Paper notices for secondary students will not be sent out. Paper notices for Intermediate students will be sent out at the discretion of a school counselor or administrator.

Negative Balance School Contact:

For students who have incurred meal debt equal to or exceeding -\$20.00, families will receive a call of compassion/concern from the school counselor/social worker to see if any further assistance is needed. If for any reason this communication effort fails to resolve the negative balance situation, the counselor/social worker at each school will look into the possibility of completing a free and reduced application for the student. Prior to completing this application the school counselor/social worker will contact Nutrition Services in an effort to identify any previous free and reduced meal benefit applications.

In Touch Account Balance Transfers:

When a student's account balance exceeds a negative -\$50.00 amount, the Nutrition Services office staff will transfer that debt to the student's school In Touch building account. An email/letter notification of all balance transfers will be sent to the student's parent or guardian, and copied to the office coordinator at the student's building. At the end of the school year all negative balances that exceed \$10.00 will be transferred to the student's In Touch account.

Families are encouraged to complete an application for Free or Reduced Price meal benefits any time during the school year if they find their personal income situation has changed.

Families are additionally encouraged to enroll in the online prepayment service through Family Access for convenient online payments and account tracking. Reminders can be set up through the Family Access system to alert families when balances are low.

If you have questions regarding these procedures please contact UPSD Child Nutrition Services at: 253-566-5700.