Meal Charge and Alternative Meal Food Service Procedure

The Cincinnati Public Schools’ Food Services Department has a no-charge policy for student meals at all schools.

For all newly enrolled students in CPS, there is a four-day grace period during which new students may receive a lunch meal without payment, to allow for the processing of their meal eligibility application.

As a special consideration for elementary students and their families, up to three alternative meals are provided each school year. After a student has received three alternative meals, the student will not receive a meal unless lunch money is provided to pay for it.

Cincinnati Public Schools’ Food Services is self-supporting. We receive no money from the district’s General Fund budget, levies, or property taxes. Food Services is funded only from federal reimbursement and student payments to pay operating expenses and fees. By federal law, Food Service revenues need to meet or exceed expenditures. Therefore, unpaid charges and unlimited alternative meals would affect the ability of Food Services to support itself.

Food Service Department meal charge procedure goals are:
• To treat all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts;
• To support positive situations with district staff, district business policies, students and parents to the maximum extent possible;
• To establish policies that are age appropriate;
• To encourage parents to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student;
• To establish a consistent department procedure regarding charges and collection of charges.

Elementary Students (K-6) Alternative Meal Procedure
1. When a student has less than $5.00 prepaid lunches remaining in his/her online prepayment account, PayPAMS automatically will send an e-mail reminder to the account’s registered e-mail address.

2. When a child does not have money in the account or to pay cash for a lunch, an alternative meal will be given to the child. When a child receives an alternative meal, the lunch room manager will give the child a note to take home to parent or guardian explaining that the child received an alternative meal today because the child did not have lunch money. The note will state what the alternative meal was, how much money the child needs to bring in to receive a lunch, and how many alternative meals the child has left. (The child will receive this note also with the second and third alternative meal.)

3. If a child does not have lunch money for a fourth time during the school year, the child will be sent to the school office.

An alternative meal is a fresh green garden salad with shredded cheese cup, fruit, crackers and a milk. This alternative lunch is a healthy option that provides protein, grains, fiber and vitamins.

Secondary Students (7-12) Alternative Meal Procedure
Secondary students should be fully responsible with money and will not be given an alternative meal.

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