



Frequently Asked Questions Food Service

How can I contact the Food Service Department?

Phone: (330) 797-3900 ext. 2032

Email: AFFoodServices@austintownschools.org

Where can I find information about the Food Service Department at Austintown Schools?

The Food Service Department has their own website: AFFoodServices.com

Please check out our website to find information on:

- Links to applying for Free/Reduced priced meals (LunchApplication.com)
- Links to adding money to your student's lunch account and setting low balance alerts (K12PaymentCenter.com)
- Current Breakfast & Lunch Menus
- Nutrition information
- Department policies

What is the role of the Food Service Department?

Food Services first and foremost ensures a smooth meal program for breakfast and lunch at each building in compliance with USDA regulations. However, there are many other aspects to our department. We process and document all of the Free and Reduced lunch applications, document meal count reports to the State, maintain a proper district Wellness Policy, work with the PTA to provide foods and beverages at school functions, and operate as a self-funded entity.

What is my Student's Lunch ID number?

Your student's lunch ID number is the same as their school ID number. This 4, 6 or 9 digit number is created for your student at the time of their enrollment. You can get this number by asking the secretary at your school, calling the Food Services Office (ext. 2032), calling Registration (ext. 1516), or on a report card. This number stays with your student through all their years here at Austintown Local Schools.

How can I apply for free or reduced priced meals?

We encourage all of our Falcon families to apply for Free or Reduced Priced meals at LunchApplication.com. This is the quickest, most efficient way to submit an application.

My household received free meals last year, do I need to apply this year?

YES! The Free or Reduced Price Meal Program is an **OPT-IN** program administered by the federal government. If you do not completely fill out an application each school year, we will assume you do not wish to participate in the program. You will receive an approval or denial letter via postal mail with your meal benefits status.

Can I request a paper application?

You can request a paper application at your school's main office. However, please be aware that the processing of paper applications can take 2 weeks after Food Services receives your application. Unfortunately, paper application can get lost in the shuffle of back to school paperwork. It is ultimately the household's responsibility to make sure the Food Service Office received your application.

I sent in a paper application but I have not heard back from the school. What happened?

If you have not heard from us via postal mail within 2 weeks, you must call Food Services at ext. 2032. Until your application is processed and you are approved for free or reduced priced meals, it is the family's responsibility to provide enough lunch money or a packed lunch for your child. Charges accumulated during this processing period will NOT be forgiven, even if you are approved for free meals. So please apply online at LunchApplication.com.

I received a Direct Certification letter before school started. What does this mean?

This letter notifies you that your household was Directly Certified for free meals via the Ohio Department of Education and you **DO NOT** need to apply via an application. Please be sure each and every one of your students is on this letter and contact our office directly in order to add any missing students to your benefits. Only the Food Services Office can add a missing student. Additionally, because your household was approved for free meals, you may choose to waive your student's school instructional fees. You must sign and return the entire letter to waive your school fees and allow us to share this information with the building secretary.

What if my student goes to the cafeteria to eat and does not have money?

The Austintown Local Schools Board of Education requires us to serve meals to all children regardless of their ability to pay. If your student comes to the cafeteria to eat we will serve them a meal and charge the meal price to their lunch account. If you do not want your student to utilize the cafeteria, please call the Food Service Office to apply a restriction to their account. The family is responsible for all charges applied to their student's account.

What is the district's meal charge policy?

Meals charged in the cafeteria are considered school fees and can never be waived. These charges carry on with a student throughout their time as an Austintown student. Once a student has charged more than \$5.00 in the cafeteria, the Food Service Department makes repeated notifications to each individual household to collect the debt. We use postal mail, email, phone calls and One Call Now.

Where can I monitor activity on my student's lunch account?

Visit K12Paymentcenter.com to create a free login and access your student's lunch account (must have your student's ID number). This website allows you to monitor your student's meal purchases, setup low balance email or text alerts and make online payments with a credit/debit card.

My student has a food allergy, how can I inform the Food Service Department?

Every school year each child must have an Emergency Medical Form completed. Food allergens are marked on this form and the school clinic informs Food Services. Upon receiving this updated information, Food Services applies an alert on your student's account highlighting their food allergy to our kitchen staff. Food allergies are cleared and updated yearly so we must be notified every school year of your student's allergies. Please see the **Food Allergy Information** sheet on our website to further understand how our department handles food allergies. If you feel you need to have a specific conversation with our department, please do not hesitate to call us.

How can I add money to my students lunch account?

We encourage our families to apply funds electronically to their students account at K12PaymentCenter.com. We also accept cash or checks made out to the school cafeteria (i.e. Austintown Elementary School Cafeteria). Please send physical payments to the cafeteria in a sealed envelope marked "Lunch Money" with your student's first and last name and ID number.

How can I add a restriction to my student's account?

Please call the Food Service Office directly to add a restriction to your student's account. We have certain parameters in which we can restrict an account and want to be sure we limit the right purchases.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider