

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is included in a lunch and what if my child does not like what is on the menu?

Lunch meals consist of a choice one of our multiple hot and/or cold entrées offered and must include at least one vegetable or fruit choice. Fresh fruits (often from local farms), a tossed garden salad and low-fat/fat free milk in several flavors are available daily. This past school year, nearly a half of million dollars was allocated to the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables. Additional **A' La Carte** items are made available daily in each building and can be purchased for those students needing that "something extra".

Breakfast meals include an entrée, a choice of fruit, juice and milk. See our **Lunch Meal Deal** and **Breakfast Meal Deal** for more information on what is included in a meal.

### What happens if my child forgets his lunch money?

- **Elementary Students:** Harford County Public Schools philosophy is that a hungry child cannot learn. While we do not encourage charging, your elementary child will still receive a meal and will be able to "charge" a breakfast or lunch to their account if money or bagged lunch from home is forgotten. Students who have an outstanding charge balance over \$10 will receive an automated phone call home. A la carte purchases are never allowed to be charged.
- **Secondary Students:** HCPS extends every child a courtesy charge of up to 3 meals. After the maximum limit is reached and the student requests an additional charge he/or she is referred to an administrator on duty in the lunch room. A la carte purchases are never allowed to be charged.

We strongly encourage parents to monitor and fund student accounts by logging on to **MySchoolBucks.com** purchases from the past 90 days of service are available for viewing online at any time. Parents should discuss meal and smart snack choices as well as what is allowed or not allowed with their children.

### My children have multiple allergies and require a strict special diet. How does HCPS provide for them?

Meal substitutions will be provided for medically diagnosed condition that requires dietary intervention. Substitutions must follow all USDA guidelines. Please contact your student's school nurse to begin accessing this service. Questions may be emailed to [Karen Olsen R.D.](mailto:Karen.Olsen@hcps.org)

### Our family is on Food Stamps and my children should be getting Free Meal Benefits. Why are they being charged?

Contact the Food and Nutrition Department at (410)638-4078 immediately as the Food Stamp information has not been received by our office. Meal Benefit application is necessary and are available at all school locations and by clicking **Meal Benefit Form** .

### What is the balance of my child's account?

**MySchoolBucks.com** provides easy 24/7 account balance for free. The widget/phone app allows monitoring and electronic payments to the account. If you have any questions you can contact our office at (410)638-4078.

### What form of payment can I send with my child for meals?

While we encourage parents to electronically fund their children's meal account at **MySchoolBucks.com** you do still have the option of sending cash to school with your child for deposit. Myschoolbucks.com accepts electronic checks, credit card, debit card or bank drafts. It is free of all service fees. Automatic monthly or balance based account deposits may be created from this secure site. Myschoolbucks.com smart phone apps are available through the App Store, Google Play and Windows store.

### I have an active teen-will she receive enough food?

A school lunch is designed to provide adequate calories for most students. However, active and growing teens may require additional calories. Your teen may purchase additional main courses, vegetables, fruits and or milk at a low a la carte price.

**Is there financial assistance available to families for school breakfast and lunch meals?**

Free or Reduced priced meals are available to students based on your household income. If your family is experiencing a temporary hardship please consider applying for reduced meal benefits. Families may apply anytime throughout the year. Meal Benefit applications are available at all school locations and by clicking **Meal Benefit Form**



You can contact Food Services at (410)638-4078 for more information.

**How do I check or limit what my student is buying with their meal account?**

Log on to **MySchoolBucks.com** to monitor your students balance and a complete 90 day purchase history. Parents should discuss meal and smart snack choices as well as what is allowed or not allowed with their children.

**What happens to money left on account in June?**

Any money remaining in your child's account as well any unpaid balances, will rollover from one school year to the next. When your student transfers to another school within Harford County Public Schools, the account is automatically available at the new school. Balances from students no longer attending HCPS may be transferred to a sibling or requested to be refunded by check by calling the Food and Nutrition office at (410)638-4078.

**I do not want my student to purchase more than a meal - what should I do?**

**MySchoolBucks.com** allows you to monitor your child's purchases- you may review these each day with child.

**Our family observes specific dietary restrictions but I still want my student to have a school meal. What accommodations are available?**

The school meal program provides a wide variety of choices daily. Many schools offer items in addition to the printed menu. Talk with the cafeteria manager to determine the options available at your child's school (such as meatless, pork or seafood free). The staff will need to know at the beginning of the day if your child is present and wants a substitution.