

## ABOUT OUR PROGRAM

The Houston School District Child Nutrition Department follows the federal guidelines set forth by USDA and MDE. Menus are planned by a Registered Dietitian with a goal of providing a variety of nourishing, kid friendly menu items at an affordable price. Food preferences of the community are considered so that students will like the menu choices offered. We are truly committed to providing healthy meals to help students grow in mind and body. We encourage students to try different foods and provide feedback to their cafeteria staff. To learn more about Child Nutrition Programs go to [www.fns.usda.gov](http://www.fns.usda.gov).

Houston School District is a member of the MS Statewide School Purchasing Program (MSSPP).

MSSPP is one of two statewide school food purchasing programs in the nation. The program is administered through MDE Office of Child Nutrition and has been in existence since 1992. There are over 180 educational entities that participate in the program across the state. MSSPP issues distribution bids for over 600 items that meet the USDA required federal regulations. No food products can be added to the bid without receiving an approval score of 75% or high in student testing.

## SCHOOL MEAL CHARGE POLICY

The Houston School District recognizes that healthy, nutritious meals are an important component to student readiness and ability to learn. The district's Child Nutrition department is a self-supporting fund that shall not have a negative balance at the close of a fiscal year in accordance with FNS Instruction 796-2 (Rev.3) which lists bad debts as a non-allowable expenditure of federal funds. Therefore, losses or meal charges cannot be paid with Child Nutrition Funds.

In accordance with the recommendation on the charging of meals by the State Department of Education, the Houston School District shall comply with the regulations as follows:

1. Adults are not allowed to charge any purchase or solicit food from students.
2. Students are not allowed to charge meals or extra food items. However, knowing that parents forget lunch money and students can lose lunch money, students of all grades will be allowed to charge up to \$12.00. If a student owes \$12.00 or more, the school shall,
  - a. Make at least 2 attempts to reach the parent or guardian and have the parent complete a meal application;
  - b. Mail, email, or phone the parent about the negative balance;
  - c. Require a school official to contact the parent to offer assistance with meal application, determine if there are other issues within the household that have caused the child to have insufficient funds to purchase a school meal, and offer assistance that is appropriate.
3. Extra foods or beverages are not allowed to be charged and will not be sold to students with outstanding balances.
4. Beginning May 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year, no charging will be permitted to allow adequate time to collect outstanding student account balances.
5. If a senior student's account is not in good standing as of May 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year, the administration may choose to prohibit the senior from participating in senior activities and/or graduation exercises.
6. Failure of a parent/guardian to bring a student's food service account into good standing or set up a payment plan with the Child Nutrition Director may result in:
  - a. Further investigation by school officials; and
  - b. Notification to appropriate state agencies including the Department of Human Services.

## HOUSTON SCHOOL DISTRICT CHILD NUTRITION

Improving Student Performance with Good Nutrition



P. O. Drawer 351  
636 Starkville Road  
Houston, MS 38851  
Phone: 662-456-5688  
Fax: 662-456-5259  
[www.hilltoppercafe.com](http://www.hilltoppercafe.com)

## SCHOOL MEAL ACCOUNTS & ELIGIBILITY

- Eligibility status is defined by USDA as Paying, Reduced Price or Free
- Free and reduced lunch applications are available for school meals. Families can apply year round.
  - You can apply online for faster processing at [www.MySchoolApps.com](http://www.MySchoolApps.com)
  - Paper forms are available at each school site or at the Child Nutrition office.
- A **new application** must be completed **each school year** or when a child transfers from one district to another or from another state.
- Meal **benefits do not become effective until the application has been approved.**
- The payment of all meals prior to application approval is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- All students are provided breakfast at no cost. Lunch prices are set by the Houston School District Child Nutrition office within parameters of federal and state regulations.
- The federal school lunch program allows an eligible student to receive one (1) reimbursable school breakfast and lunch every day.

### Blocks & Alerts on Accounts

A parent may call the Child Nutrition office to place a block on their child's account to prohibit the purchase of extra sale items and/or charging.

### Special Diets

A Medical Statement for Special Diets form or Religious Statement for Special Diets form must be completed and returned to the Child Nutrition Department. No modifications can be made until a form is received. A new form should be submitted each year. Forms can be found on the Child Nutrition website, [www.hilltoppercafe.com](http://www.hilltoppercafe.com)

## What Makes a Tray?

Select a minimum of 3 or a maximum of 5

Choices:

Protein Grain Fruit Vegetable Milk

Must include a **Fruit** or **Vegetable**

## UNDERSTANDING A REIMBURSABLE MEAL

All students must take a "reimbursable meal"

### What is a reimbursable meal?

One that consists of at least 3 of the 5 offered components & must include a fruit or vegetable component.

### What is a component?

Think of it as a food group

### What are extra sale items?

Smart Snacks approved food items that can be purchased after a reimbursable meal has been purchased if account is in good standing.

### Can extra components be purchased?

Yes, extras of each component can be purchased after a reimbursable meal has been purchased.

**Extra sale items and extra components cannot be charged.**

This institution is an equal opportunity provider

## SCHOOL MEAL ACCOUNT MONITORING & PAYMENTS

The Houston School District accepts payment of school meals in the form of cash or check or pre-payments via the school meal online payment center. Parents are strongly encouraged to register for a free account on the school meal payment center, [www.MySchoolBucks.com](http://www.MySchoolBucks.com)

Parents can:

- ◆ View student transaction history
- ◆ Request email alerts for low balances
- ◆ Make payments & pre-payments to student's account
- ◆ Schedule payments to add funds to a student's account
- ◆ Set up automatic deposits to a student's account

*There is a small fee for using the online payment center. This fee does not benefit the Houston School District.*

### SCHOOL MEAL PRICES

Student Breakfast:	<b>all students eat for free</b>
Student Lunch:	\$2.50 for K4 – 5
	\$2.75 for 6 – 12
	\$0.40 Reduced
Adult Breakfast:	\$2.25
Adult Lunch:	\$3.50