



## **Quick Reference Guide**

Café Prepay is a website which enables parents to keep track of their student's cafeteria account balance and daily purchases (aka, cafeteria "participation report"). The website also enables parents to pay toward their student's account via credit card, with the option of setting up worry-free Automatic Replenish payments.

Please note that Café Prepay simply links to your student's existing account at the school. No funds are ever lost by deleting your student from the Café Prepay website, as the account balances are maintained by the school districts and uploaded back to the website.

### **I. Creating a New Account**

The first step in making an online payment or checking your student's information online is to create an account on the Café Prepay website:

1. Go to [cafeprepay.com](http://cafeprepay.com)
2. Click on the New User tab and follow the steps for setting up your account. You will be asked to enter your email address and a password, which will be used each time you log in. Please note that a valid email address is required and that Café Prepay stores any necessary personal information in a secure, offline database which is accessed only to process payments and send payment confirmations via email.

If you have any trouble moving from the first to the second page of this initial set up, please try accessing the site directly by typing [cafeprepay.com](http://cafeprepay.com) in your address bar (as opposed to following a link from your school or district's website). If you're still not able to see the security text or advance to the next page, you probably need to lower your privacy settings. Normally you can have your privacy set as high as medium-high and still be able to set up an account, but there may be something else on your computer preventing you from setting up your account with the higher privacy settings. Please try the following if you are using Internet Explorer:

1. Click on the Tools Menu
2. Click on Internet Options
3. Click the Privacy tab
4. Drag the setting to Medium
5. Click Apply
6. Click OK

## **II. Adding a Student to Your Online Account**

Before you can make payments or check balances online, you must first add your student(s) to your account. When no student is attached to the account, the website automatically directs you to the Add Student page. From there, you simply:

1. Click on your state, district and school.
2. At this point you'll be searching the Café Prepay database for your student. Please enter just the first three letters of the student's last name in the Name field, leaving the Grade field blank, and then click Find Student to cast the widest net for finding your student.
3. Your student's name should appear below the Find Student box. Simply click Add to My Students where this link appears next to your student's name and grade. Please note that you will not find your student until your district has added him/her to the cafeteria Point of Sale system. Often districts do not update the lists for the new school year until a few days prior to the first day of school.

## **III. Checking Your Student's Balance**

For security reasons, you either need to enter your student's ID number or make a payment toward your student's account in order to view the balance. The ID number is made up of the Lowndes County Schools identifier (692) plus the 5-digit PIN number.

Only the schools are allowed to give out ID information, so you would need to contact the school directly if you're not seeing this information in any registration or other materials from the school. Please make sure to ask for the complete ID.

Please note that as you make payments, your school's cafeteria will download them to your student's cafeteria account at set times throughout the day; depending on how your service is setup.

Once the school downloads your payment, the funds are available for your student to use. There is typically, however, a lag between the time that the payment is applied to your student's account and the information is uploaded to and reflected in the Current Balance link online. This lag time is typically 10-90 minutes from the time of the download. Please rest assured that your payments will be applied and available for use at the time of download.

## **IV. Making a Payment**

To make a payment using MasterCard, Visa, or Discover, simply click on the Make Payments link where you can then select to either make a payment “on the fly” (Continue and Pay by Credit Card) or to schedule future payments on a monthly or “auto replenish” basis. If selecting Continue and Pay by Credit Card, please follow all of the prompts in the checkout cart until you've clicked the final Process Payment button. If you do not already have a default credit card listed on your account, you will be prompted to enter your credit card information. Please note that most declined transactions are the result of entering the incorrect Security Code. If you do receive a declined-transaction error, please read the resulting error message text.

## **V. Payment Schedules**

If you would like, you may choose to set up either monthly payments or Automatic Replenish on Low Balance. Once you've set up a schedule, you may edit it or end it at any time by clicking on the Edit Scheduled Payments link.

Automatic Replenish on Low Balance is optimal for the student whose lunch spending varies greatly from day to day. With this type of schedule set up, when the student's account balance goes below a specified amount, then another specified amount is deposited into the student's account via credit card. With this system, the student will never run out of money in his/her account. Conversely, your credit card will not be charged until the student's balance goes below the specified dollar amount. We suggest selecting a “low balance” threshold amount of \$10. It's also important to select a Replenishment amount that will cover at least one-week's worth of cafeteria spending, as Automatic Replenish will not attempt a new payment within seven days of any other payment.

When setting up Automatic Replenish, it's important to enter an End Date. Please choose a date close to the end of the school year. You will be able to edit this at any time if you need to.

When setting up monthly payments, please note that payments will occur each month on the same date that you select as your first payment date. If you enter September 6, for example, as your payment start date, your payments will occur on the 6<sup>th</sup> of each month.