

**Center Joint Unified School District-Nutrition Services Department**  
**8408 Watt Ave. Bldg. #0, Antelope, CA 95843**  
**Meal Payment Strategies and Procedures**

Center Joint Unified School District is passionate about ensuring students have access to healthy school meals to support our student's mental, physical, and academic growth.

Unpaid school meal debt can become a critical problem, and if left unaddressed, can impact the quality of meals for all students. We encourage parents/guardians to prepay their children's meal account and apply online for the Free/Reduced meal program at [family.titank12.com](http://family.titank12.com). Paper applications will still be available at your child's school site or the Nutrition Services department. Meal applications can be submitted anytime throughout the school year.

- Parents or Guardians are responsible for student meal payments and to ensure their children have a meal or meal money daily. We allow meal charges if a student forgets their meal or meal money, we do not allow charging for second meals. We do not allow Ala Carte purchases if the student has a negative balance. **Outstanding negative meal balances are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.** Our Nutrition department works hard to connect struggling families with meal assistance, so no student goes hungry during the school day. We also will work with families to establish a payment plan to help clear any unpaid meal charges. Federal guidelines prohibit Child Nutrition Programs from dismissing bad debt (2 CFR 200.426).
- **Delinquent Meal Accounts-** The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that a student whose parent/guardian has unpaid school meal fees is not overtly identified, shamed, treated differently, or served a meal that differs from the meal choices offered to other students. Automated calls and emails are generated to alert parents of their child's negative meal account balances. At the elementary sites, courtesy low balance reminder notes are given to the students to take home. At the secondary sites, confidential low balance verbal reminders are communicated to the students. It is not the intent of the school or cafeteria staff to punish or embarrass any student. We ask for the assistance of our parents/guardians to help keep our program in place by making sure children have a meal or meal money daily, our department funds itself and cannot operate without the required financial resources.
- **Students/Parents/Guardians-** Our Nutrition Department can take credit card payments, cash or check. Any remaining funds left on student accounts will be carried over to the next school year and will stay with that child as they change schools within our district. Payment for meals can also be made in advance in the school cafeteria, online, or at the time of service. Parents/guardian's using a credit or debit card may establish an online meal account through [family.titank12.com](http://family.titank12.com). Payments made online are preferred for enhanced accountability. A \$20.00 fee will be charged for each check returned for non-sufficient funds. Our school cafeterias have computerized points of sale that maintain records of all money deposited and meals served. Information and account balances are available by calling the Nutrition department at (916)338-6416.
- **Refunds-** for withdrawn and/or graduating students; a written or emailed request for a refund of money remaining in their account must be submitted through mail or brought to; Nutrition Services Dept., 8408 Watt Ave. Bldg.#0, Antelope, CA 95843 **or** emailed to [nutritionservices@centerusd.org](mailto:nutritionservices@centerusd.org), we will need the name of your child, your name, phone number & address. Refund forms are available online at "centerusd.org", click on Departments then Nutrition Services, or pick one up in our Nutrition Department. Parents are also given the option to transfer extra money to a sibling's account or donate to a disadvantaged student's negative balance account.
- **Unclaimed Funds-** must be requested within 365 days after they leave the district through email at [nutritionservices@centerusd.org](mailto:nutritionservices@centerusd.org), we will need the name of your child, your name, phone number & address. Refund forms are available online at centerusd.org, click on Departments then Nutrition Services, or pick one up at our Nutrition Department. Unclaimed funds will become the property of Center Joint Unified School District after the 365 days. Reduced status students will automatically be refunded any balance left on their meal account when they leave the district. If they have a shared account with their siblings the money will remain on the shared account until the last sibling leaves the district. Healthy school meals are just as important to academic achievement as the textbooks that students receive. We work hard to ensure every student has access to the nutrition they need to succeed.