

PALOS VERDES PENINSULA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
FOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENT

MEAL CHARGE POLICY

It is the goal of the Food Services Department to make available and to provide nutritious meals to all students of the District.

A nutritionally adequate (reimbursable) lunch is available at all school sites daily and a nutritionally adequate (reimbursable) breakfast is available at all secondary school sites daily. Eligible students may receive their meal(s) for free or for a reduced-price. All other students are charged a set price for breakfast and lunch. If a student does not have sufficient funds to pay for their meal, the same nutritionally adequate breakfast or lunch will be provided and the student's meal account will be charged the set price into a negative balance. The student shall have the same choice of menu features as all other students. Snack and a la carte items (non-reimbursable) may not be charged into the negative balance.

When a student's meal account balance is less than or equal to \$0.00, a letter will be sent home via email, if available, or sent home with the student once a week, by the school cafeteria. For balances less than or equal to -\$10.00, a letter will be sent home twice a week. Parents/guardians of students with outstanding debts may be contacted directly by the Food Services Department main office via email or phone call. Only authorized district or Food Services staff may assist with collecting unpaid meal charges.

Negative balances are expected to be paid by the parent/guardian as quickly as possible. If a parent/guardian believes their student may be eligible for free/reduced-price meals, a meal eligibility application is available and may be completed at any time during the school year. After the first thirty (30) days of school or enrollment, any unpaid meal charges accumulated prior to being approved for free or reduced-price meals are expected to be paid in full.

Students will not be shamed or made to feel embarrassed for not having adequate funds to purchase a meal. Likewise, a student will not overtly identified or be made to feel different than any other student. Additionally, a students' unpaid meal charges will be kept confidential by the Food Services staff and any letters sent home to a parent/guardian will be done so discreetly.

All reasonable steps will be taken by the district to recover outstanding debts. In current District practice, various extracurricular items (e.g. yearbooks, formal/prom tickets, athletic event tickets, etc.) are withheld at the end of the year from students that have not returned library books, textbooks, uniforms, etc. Unpaid meal charges will be included in these efforts, to encourage payment of outstanding debts. However, no item will be withheld solely for unpaid meal charges.

Outstanding debt that has been unrecovered, after all reasonable steps have been taken, is considered bad debt by the end of the fiscal year in which the debt was incurred. Bad debt is an unallowable cost to the Food Services budget (Fund 13), per Title 2, *Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR)*, Section 200.426. Bad debt must be repaid through nonfederal funding sources (e.g. Parent-Teacher Association or district general fund) at the end of the fiscal year in which the bad debt was incurred. Additionally, the cost to recover unpaid meal charges cannot exceed the actual debt owed.