



## 2017-18 Food Service Charge Policy

**It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to keep a positive meal balance in their student(s) account or to pack a lunch from home.** The Food Service Department is self-supporting – no monies from the general fund help to operate the Food Service Department. Payments must be made promptly to ensure that the department can continue to operate in a fiscally responsible manner.

We strongly discourage meal charges, but we understand that an occasional emergency sometimes make it necessary. We care for the well-being of our students therefore no student will be denied a meal. We just ask that **elementary students** do not incur more than **\$10.00** in negative meal charges and **\$5.00** for **secondary students**. This allows a parent/guardian adequate time to settle their student(s) meal account. A la carte items are **not** allowed to be charged or purchased if a student has a negative balance beyond the charge limit.

If a student has a negative balance greater than \$10 (elementary) or \$5 (secondary) they will be offered an alternative meal if a meal from home or cash in hand to pay outstanding balance. The alternative lunch is a complete meal consisting of a cheese sandwich along with all the side choices of fruit, vegetable and milk and will be charged at full price to the student's meal account and added to their owed balance. There is not an alternative meal for breakfast.

Cashiers make every effort to regularly notify students and the parent/guardian through gentle verbal reminders at the point of sale, negative account balance letters, emails and phone calls in an attempt to notify the parent/guardian of their student(s) balance. **Ultimately, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to monitor their student(s) meal account balance.** This can be done through the schools' online payment program; mymealtime.com. Notifications can be turned on to alert the parent/guardian when their student(s) account is nearing a minimum limit and needs to be replenished.

On May 1<sup>st</sup> of each school year **all charging** will be stopped. ALL negative balances must be **paid in full** by the end of the school year. If a student has not been provided with a meal from home and continues to have a negative balance on the cutoff date an alternative lunch of a cheese sandwich along with all the side choices of fruit, vegetable and milk will be given to student. The alternative lunch is a complete meal and will be charged at full price to the student's meal account and added to their owed balance.

If your financial situation has changed you may qualify for free or reduced lunch assistance. Meal assistance applications can be found on the Griffith Public Schools web site or at your students' school office. Quick and convenient On-Line Applications are available as well. In the event parent/guardian(s) continue to maintain negative balances and the outstanding balance is not paid, the Food Service Department may choose to use other means to collect this debt.

\*Any charges incurred before the approval of meal assistance must be paid in full by the parent/guardian as applications cannot be applied retroactively.



## **2017-18 Food Service Inactive, Bad Debt and Refund Policy**

**It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to keep a positive meal balance in their student(s) account or to pack a lunch from home.** The Food Service Department is self-supporting – no monies from the general fund help to operate the Food Service Department. Payments must be made promptly to ensure that the department can continue to operate in a fiscally responsible manner.

We strongly discourage meal charges, but we understand that an occasional emergency sometimes make it necessary. We care for the well-being of our students therefore no student will be denied a meal. In the occurrence students begin to reach a minimum dollar amount in charges further actions will be taken by Griffith Public School Food Service Department.

As mentioned in the Food Service Charge Policy if a student has a negative balance greater than \$10 (elementary) or \$5 (secondary) they will be offered an alternative meal at the price of a regular meal. The charges will continue to accumulate unless cash on hand is used to purchase a meal or the negative balance is cleared. Official notices will be sent home before the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester to all households with students having a negative balance of \$15 or greater stating payment must be made within 30 days. **In the event a student or household have a negative balance greater than \$20.00 by the end of 2<sup>nd</sup> semester the debt amounts will be turned over to the district's collection agency.** The same process will be completed at the end of the school year. Any student with positive or negative balances less than \$20 will rollover to the next school year.

Once a household is turned over to collections the student's meal accounts will be zeroed out and a record will be kept listing the negative balances. Parents will be able to make payments at Central Office, located at 602 N Raymond Street, towards accounts sent to collections. Please do not make payments at your student's school for collection payments.

**Refunds** are not given at the point of service. **Refunds may only be processed through the Office of Food Services.** A custodial parent, guardian or a graduate student may request a refund of positive account balances by completing the required form and presenting a valid ID. Checks are printed once a month. Afterwards the student's account will be zeroed out and a note placed on the account that a refund has been processed.

**Inactive Students** are a student that has graduated or withdrawn. Parents have 30 days to request a refund for the account's positive remaining balance. After 30 days the account is closed and zeroed out. The money will then go into a "Closed Account Balance" account. If there is a negative balance of \$15.00 or greater it will be included in the next collection of unpaid debt.

If your financial situation has changed you may qualify for free or reduced lunch assistance. Meal assistance applications can be found on the Griffith Public Schools web site or at your students' school office. Quick and convenient On-Line Applications are available as well. In the event parent/guardian(s) continue to maintain negative balances and the outstanding balance is not paid, the Food Service Department may choose to use other means to collect this debt.

\*Any charges incurred before the approval of meal assistance must be paid in full by the parent/guardian as applications cannot be applied retroactively.