

Meal Charge Policy

The purpose of this policy is to have a consistent system to provide meals to students who have insufficient funds in their school meal accounts and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances.

The intent of this policy is to establish constant meal account procedures throughout Dobson Academy. The provisions of this policy pertain to regular priced school breakfast and lunch meals only.

Statement of Policy

1. Dobson Academy's goal is to provide nutritious meals to students to promote healthy eating habits and enhance learning as well as maintain the financial integrity of the National School Breakfast and Lunch program and eliminate stigmatization of children who are unable to pay meal charges.
2. It is the policy of Dobson Academy to offer breakfast and lunch meals that meet state and federal guidelines.
3. Families may apply for free or reduced-price meal benefits anytime during the school year. Meal applications are available prior to the student's first day of school. In addition, applications are available in the front office or on the school's website. If household income or size changes, families can apply for meal benefits anytime during the school year. An income eligibility guideline is also available on the school's website.
4. Funds can be added to a student's meal account by check, cash, or with a debit or credit card through Dobson Academy's website. (Instructions: go to <https://dobsonacademy.org/payments>, under Category select Nutrition Program/Lunch, enter the Student's Name, and then select pay now. On the Price per item enter in the amount, press continue- select Pay with a Debit or Credit card and enter in your information.

Charge Policy

Free Meal Benefit - Free status students will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch each day. (Free status- are directly certified by the Department of Education who determines eligibility and those who are categorized as free based on school year lunch application).

Reduced Meal Benefit - Reduced status students will be allowed to receive breakfast for \$.30 and lunch for \$.40 each day. (Reduced status- is based on the school year lunch application).

Full Paying Student- If the students account has insufficient funds, a student will be allowed to charge a maximum of 3 meals (breakfast/lunch). Once a student has charged the 3 meals, the student will not be allowed to charge a meal.

If a student has a negative lunch account balance before they become eligible for free or reduced priced meals based on the school year meal application the student will always be served a meal regardless of unpaid food service accounts. The negative lunch account balance must be paid in full before the school year ends. If the student has a negative school lunch balance who are considered a full paying student from the previous school year, will not be able to receive any school meals unless the balance is paid in

full. If a student has “cash on hand” to pay for a meal, the student will be served a meal regardless of unpaid foodservice accounts. The “cash on hand” will not be applied towards past due balances.

Notification of Account Status

Account balances can be reviewed from your parent PowerSchool account, see Meal Balance in the PowerSchool App and set up your account to receive notification. Having a notification setup within PowerSchool’s will send an alert when the account has reached a balance of \$10.00.

Procedures by the Nutrition Department as Followed:

- A. An email will be sent to the student’s parent/guardian with a negative lunch account balance to request a payment.
- B. The parent/guardian will be notified via phone call when the students lunch account balance is in the negative.
- C. A letter will be sent home with the student’s negative account balance to request payment.
- D. A letter will be sent via US Post to the household requesting payment.
- E. We will encourage parents to complete the free/reduced-price meal application.

If collection of funds is not settled further actions will be taken:

- A. The Nutrition Coordinator will contact the Principal if no payment is received.
- B. The Principal will contact the parent/guardian to determine an appropriate solution.
- C. The Principal or their designee will contact the family and review with them their responsibility to provide meals for their student.
- D. The expectation is all fees owed to Dobson Academy’s Nutrition program will be paid in full by last day the student will be attending classes.

General Information

Refunds for withdrawn and graduating students; a request for a refund of any funds remaining in the student’s lunch account must be submitted. An e-mail request is acceptable to the Nutrition Coordinator. Students who are graduating at the end of the year will be given an option to transfer to a sibling’s account.

If a student is without meal funds on a consistent basis, the administration will investigate the situation more closely and take further action as needed. If financial hardship exists, parents and families are encouraged to apply for free or reduced-price meals for their child.