

Unpaid 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 schools 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 schools 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 (breakfast and/or 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 Debit or Credit Card and enter in your debit/credit card information).

Charge Policy

Free Meal Benefit - Free status students will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch each day.

Reduced Meal Benefit - Reduced status students will be allowed to receive breakfast for \$.30 and lunch for \$.40 each day. A student will be allowed to charge a maximum of 8 meals to their account after the balance reaches zero. Once a student has charged those 8 meals, he/she will not be allowed to charge a meal.

Full Paying Student- If the students account has insufficient funds, a student will be allowed to charge a maximum of 3 meals, \$2.00 for breakfast and \$3.50 for lunch to their account after the balance reaches zero. Once a student has charged the 3 meals, he/she will not be allowed to charge a full priced meal, however he/she will be offered a designated lunch alternate. Alternative meal includes: cheese or peanut butter sandwich with a vegetable, fruit and milk. This designated alternate menu will be charged to the students meal account at the rate of \$2.50, but only up to 3 lunch meals.

Students eligible for free or reduced-price meals will always be served a meal regardless of unpaid food service accounts. When a student has "cash in hand" to pay for a meal, the student will be served a meal regardless of unpaid foodservice accounts. The "cash in hand" will not be applied towards past due balances.

If students who have a previous account balance before they become eligible for free or reduced lunch, the previous balance must be paid in full before the school year ends. If those that have a balance who are 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.

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.

- A. Weekly emails will be sent the later part of the week to those with a negative account.
- B. The parent/guardian will be notified via phone call when the household account is at -\$5.00 or more.
- C. Notices will be sent home with students negative balances each week.
- D. We will encourage parents to complete the free/reduced-price meal application.
- E. An email reminder is sent to parents requesting a payment when student accounts do not have adequate funds.
- F. A second request for payment is sent if parents have not responded to the first request.
- G. A letter will be sent via US Post to the household requesting payment.

When the student meal balance is -\$5.00, the following collection actions will be taken:

- A. The Nutrition Coordinator will contact the household to request payment.
- B. The Nutrition Coordinator will contact the Principal if no payment is received. 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 on the 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 their account must be submitted. An e-mail request is acceptable. Students who are graduating at the end of the year will be given the option to transfer to a sibling's account.

If a student is without meal account 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 lunches for their child.