

Lincoln Public Schools District Office
5905 O Street Lincoln NE 68510
Nutrition Services Department 402-436-1746
Accounting Department 402-436-1700
www.lps.org

Unpaid Meal Charges (Negative Balances) for School Meals Standard Practice

The District will comply with the National School Meals Programs and all other federal grant programs that provide free or reduced meals to students. Students receiving reduced or paid meals without money in their account or payment in hand will receive a school meal (breakfast and/or lunch) and have the meal(s) charged to their meal account. Parents will receive notification of charges via a Negative Balance letter or automated phone call once balance owed reaches \$10.00. When negative balance reaches \$25.00 the parent will receive letters through US mail requesting payment. A letter will also be sent when meal charges are being sent to collection agency. In order for families to receive these notices current address and phone number need to be on-file with the school. Families are encouraged to regularly check their account balance and track their child's spending to prevent accruing unpaid meal charges. It is the parent's responsibility to provide the funds for the child's school meals. Negative balances are expected to be paid in full each school year. Unpaid meal charges will be carried over at the end of the school year as a delinquent debt and collection efforts may continue into the new school year.

Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals

Families of students who may be eligible for free or reduced price school meals must submit a new application each new school year to determine eligibility. Applications are available on-line at www.lps.org. A copy of the application can also be printed from this web site. Paper applications are available at the School Office, District Office and Nutrition Services Office (5905 O Street). Application must be submitted on or after July 1 to be considered for the new school year. A parent may apply for free or reduced meal benefits at any time during the school year. Until eligibility for free and reduced price meals is determined the student will be charged for meals at the full meal price (paid) rate. Once a child is determined eligible to receive free or reduced price meals, the status remains in effect for the duration of the school year. Notification of eligibility is received via email if address is available. Families who receive a letter from LPS Nutrition Services Department stating they will receive free or reduced meal benefits because they have been determined eligible through Direct Certification from the Nebraska Department of Education do not need to complete an application for the new school year.

Meal Account Balances and Payments

Families may check their meal account balances online at lps.org or by calling the school cafeteria manager or Nutrition Services Department at the District Office. Payment for school meals may be made online at lps.org, with check or cash at the school, or credit or debit card by calling the Accounting Department. Families are encouraged to prepay for reduced and paid meals and regularly check their child account balance. Any balance remaining in a pre-paid account shall carry over into the next school year. When a student leaves the District or graduates, the District will send a refund request form to the student's household so the District may return any funds remaining in the student's meal account. Families are encouraged to request a refund at the time the student is leaving the District from the school office. All students with reduced price meal benefits will receive a refund. For families of students who leave the District or graduate that are not approved for free or reduced price meals and who have account balances, the failure to request such balance within 30-days of leaving or graduation shall be deemed a donation of the funds remaining to the benefit of any other student in the District. A student moving to a new school within LPS, the meal account will transfer with the student.