

School District of La Crosse

School Meal Purchase Payment Requirements

The payment requirements below apply to those students that are paying full or reduced prices for meals. These payment requirements do NOT apply to those students enrolled in FREE LUNCH under the Federal USDA Child Nutrition Program.

Background and Philosophy

The Goal of the District's breakfast and lunch programs is to provide healthy meals for all students each school day. Achieving this goal is in part dependent upon generating the financial resources necessary to fund the school meal program. Primary funding sources for our school meal program are the Federal government and meal prices charged to families. Federal funds cover the cost of meals for children that come from households with income below defined levels.

To help families in need, notification of the Free and Reduced Application process will be made prior to the beginning of the school year. Free and Reduced Applications will be available throughout the year. Reminders of the Free and Reduced program will be provided by the School Nutrition Department, school guidance counselors, school psychologists and other professionals as they become aware of a potential need. Reminders will be tactful and respectful of privacy and pride.

Families not meeting federal income guidelines for FREE meals are expected to pay the cost of meals consumed by their child(ren).¹ When each family pays for the meals consumed by their child(ren) everyone pays their appropriate share. The District does not support the concept of higher meal prices, so that some families can go without paying for their child(ren)'s meals. Therefore, the District will require timely and full payment for meals purchased and collection of all outstanding payments due. When students reach defined outstanding balance limits (see below), the family will be informed of non-school meal options to meet their child(ren)'s nutritional needs and be given a reasonable amount of time to make payment. When a student's outstanding balance exceeds defined limits, the child(ren) of the family will not be eligible to participate in the school meal program.

However, no child will have a meal taken away from them once the meal has been served to them. This provision is put in place to avoid any public embarrassment to a child based upon the failure to act by their parent/guardian. If a student appears to misuse this provision action may be taken to eliminate this misuse.

- 1 The Federal USDA Child Nutrition Program does not require children with an outstanding balance on their account be served a meal.

Process Description

Student Account Balance	Action	
	Elementary	Middle and High School
Student Account Balance reaches <u>\$6 or less</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At each purchase, the student is notified by the cashier that money is needed to be deposited into the account. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twice a week (Tuesdays/Thursdays), a Skylert message and Email notification will be sent to primary/Family 1 contact notifying of a low balance and requesting additional money be deposited into the student's account.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student continues to be eligible for school meals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At each purchase, the cashier will notify the student that the lunch account is in need of money. It is the student's responsibility at that point to remind parents or guardians of the need for a deposit into the student account. Twice a week (Tuesday/Thursday), a Skylert Message and Email notification will be sent to primary/Family 1 contact notifying of a negative balance and requesting additional money be deposited into the student's account.
Student Account Balance reaches <u>\$0 or below</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student continues to be eligible for school meals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Twice a week (Tuesday/Thursday), a Skylert Message and Email notification will be sent to primary/Family 1 contact notifying of a negative balance and requesting additional money be deposited into the student's account.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly – Nutrition Manager sends letters to each family to inform them of the need to deposit more money and the possibility of discontinuation of service in five (5) school days if a payment is not received. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The School Nutrition Office will contact the parent/guardian via phone or phone message to those not responding to the letter to inform of the possibility of discontinuation of service within five (5) school days if a payment is not received or arrangements made.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Administration is notified of the student name(s) and outstanding balance in excess of -\$30. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Administration contacts the parent/guardian to explain need to make timely and full payments for meals, remind the parent/guardians of the free or reduced program (contact the School Nutrition Office at 608-789-7625 for more information), inform on the need to make other plans to provide the student with a meal to meet their child(ren)'s nutritional needs if a payment is not made within five (5) business days of the -\$30.00 balance, and to notify the parent that meals will be discontinued on the sixth business day unless the balance is paid in full before that day.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Administration informs the teacher [who takes the student lunch count in the morning] and the School Nutrition Office of the parent contact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If payment is <u>not</u> received within five (5) business days of the -\$30.00 balance, the School Nutrition Office will inform building administration who will then make contact with the student to make sure an alternate meal was brought to school. If not, building administration will contact the parents/guardians to alert them to the fact that no meal will be served until the account is brought up to date.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are ineligible to participate in the school meals program except when prepaying with cash. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principal will check to make sure the parent/guardian has provided an alternative meal. The principal will contact the parent/guardian if alternative meal arrangements have not been made.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are ineligible to participate in the school meals program except when prepaying with cash. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principal will check to make sure the parent/guardian has provided an alternative meal. The principal will contact the parent/guardian if alternative meal arrangements have not been made.
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Six (6) business days following the notification in the previous step	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are ineligible to participate in the school meals program except when prepaying with cash. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principal will check to make sure the parent/guardian has provided an alternative meal. The principal will contact the parent/guardian if alternative meal arrangements have not been made.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students are ineligible to participate in the school meals program except when prepaying with cash. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The principal will check to make sure the parent/guardian has provided an alternative meal. The principal will contact the parent/guardian if alternative meal arrangements have not been made.

General Provisions

Meal purchases with a \$0 or negative balance

- Students will not be allowed to charge Ala Carte food items when the student account is below zero. Should a student attempt such a purchase:
 - the student will be reminded that the status of their account does not allow the purchase of Ala Carte items ,
 - the Ala Carte item(s) will be taken back from the student, and
 - as allowed under the requirements above the student will be encouraged to purchase a full meal.
- Students may purchase meals or Ala Carte items with cash regardless of a negative balance in their account.

Negative Balance at the end of the school year

- Student accounts with outstanding balances are required to be paid in full by the last day of each school year.
- Seniors must pay all accumulated charges prior to their last day of school in order to settle all outstanding unpaid financial obligations to the School District in order to be in compliance for graduation.

Payment Methods

- Payments can be made online using the RevTrak portal 24/7 using a credit card or debit card. Portal is easily accessible from Skyward Family Access. A link can be found on the School Nutrition page of the District Website.
- Cash or checks are accepted at each school or at the District Office at 807 East Ave. S. in La Crosse.

Families Experiencing Financial Difficulties

- Contact the School Nutrition Office at 608-789-7625 to make arrangements for the continuation of meal service, including to set up payment arrangements.
- Fill out a Free or Reduced Meal Application.
- Encouraged to call the Great Rivers 211 Information & Referral and Crisis Line by Dialing 211 or 1-800-362-8255

Outstanding Balances

- An outstanding balance is in excess of negative \$30 or an outstanding balance of any amount existing for more than 60 days. The District reserves the right to take steps deemed necessary to collect charges owed.
- These actions could include: turning the outstanding balance over to a collection agency, small claims court, revocation of charging privileges or other actions as deemed necessary.

Remaining Account Balance Upon Student Withdrawal or Graduation

- May donate balance to the Lunch Fund
- May transfer to a sibling's account
- May request a refund if the balance is \$5.00 or above (no refunds for amounts less than \$5.00)
- Any amount that is not claimed within 1 year will automatically be transferred to Lunch Fund

ADOPTED: August 2023

LEGAL REF: Federal USDA Child Nutrition Program