

FOOD SERVICES

Food Service and Meal Account Balance Guidelines

I. Purpose

- To establish fair and consistent rules regarding meal account charges and expectations of payments for services rendered
- To establish fair and consistent rules that allow the food service department to collect all monies due to the school district for meal service provided
- To build positive and clear communication between the district food service department, school district staff and the community regarding these guidelines

II. Payments

- It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to monitor and keep student meal accounts funded at all times.
- A free online account can be set up at www.Schoolcafe.com to monitor student balances and to request automatic low balance email reminders.
- If you are unable to pay for meals, please visit www.compass.state.pa.us for information regarding the free and reduced meal program.

III. Negative Meal Account Balances

It is expected that student meal accounts be funded at all times. Families are encouraged to create a free online account at www.Schoolcafe.com to monitor student meal purchases and set up low balance reminders. We do understand that negative balances can occasionally occur; therefore, the following rules will apply regarding charges to students' meal accounts:

- No student who requests a meal will be denied a main lunch option, unless the student's parent or guardian has provided a written request to the Food Service Department to withhold a school lunch or to not allow ala carte options. When documentation from the parent or guardian has been provided, items can be removed from the student's tray at the register.
- A school meal option must include three of the five components; one must be a fruit or vegetable. The five lunch components are Meat/Meat alternative, Grain, Fruit, Vegetable and Milk.
- When all components of a breakfast or lunch are not taken, the cashier must charge ala carte prices for the food items.
- Students in grades 1-8 will not be reminded at the register of current balance. Students in grades 9-12 may be discreetly encouraged to review their account balances. All students may request their balance from the cashier. All balance notifications will be sent directly to a parent/guardian's email on file. If an email is not available, a letter will be mailed to a parent/guardian's address on file.
- Additional electronic communications will be sent to families with negative balances greater than \$20.00 from the food service office.
- Meals served to students should not be removed or exchanged as a result of overdrawn meal accounts or free/reduced status. When a student with an overdrawn meal account has selected a

full reimbursable meal and they do not have positive funds or cash to purchase, the student will be permitted to have the full reimbursable meal without discussion. The meal will be charged to the child's meal account. Students who wish to purchase extras or a la carte food items must have positive funds or cash to make the purchase.

- When purchases are made with cash, change should be issued to the student except when the student asks for the balance to be applied to his/her meal account.
- In the event that a community organization or a community family would like to donate money to students' meal accounts, the organization or individual must specify if they are donating to the entire district or a particular school in the district. They must also specify if they are donating to a specific individual within the Pine-Richland School District. If a general donation is made with no specifications, the district will start with the highest negative meal account of a student with free meal eligibility and work its way down through the free accounts, then reduced accounts. For paid accounts, the district will start with the lowest negative meal account of a student and work its way up through the accounts.
- In the event that a student's meal account is over -\$100.00 and three email and/or letter attempts have been made to collect the debt without response, the district may use a third party collection agency to complete the collection process.

IV. **Closing a Meal Account**

Closing a Pine-Richland Cafeteria Account form can be obtained from the main office or on-line at the [PR Food Service Page](#). Please complete the form and send to the Sodexo/PR Food Service Office at 700 Warrendale Road, Gibsonsia, PA. 15044. Notification will be sent if a refund is due or a payment to balance the account is necessary.

Should a student leave the district and / or graduate without using the closing account form, the school district will send a notification email/letter regarding the balance of the account. If no response is received by the end of the school year and a positive balance exists, the positive balance will be considered a general donation and follow the procedure noted above. If the end of the year balance is more than -\$100.00, the district may use a third party collection agency to complete the collection process.

V. **End of Year Meal Account Balances**

- Letters will be provided weekly and during the last week of school if a student's meal account has a negative balance.
- Seniors
 - All monies owed to the district food service must be paid in full prior to graduation. A Closing a Meal Account form should be completed and provided to the Food Service Department prior to the end of June. Funds can be transferred to another student, donated or refunded.
- If a positive balance is left in a student's account at end of school year, that balance will remain and carry over into the next school year.