

## **SCHOOL MEAL ACCOUNT INFORMATION**

- Prices for school meals are set by the Vail School District in accordance with federal and state regulations.
- Families may obtain information about the district's school lunch and breakfast program and apply for free or reduced price meals at [www.vailschooldistrict.org](http://www.vailschooldistrict.org) or by contacting the student's school or the district's school food service office at [vailfoodservice@vailschooldistrict.org](mailto:vailfoodservice@vailschooldistrict.org) or call Cynthia Griego at 520-879-2015 or Linda Millman at 520-879-2072
- It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to ensure the student has money in his or her student meal account. A student meal account is delinquent if the account balance has a negative balance.
- Because the district cares about the well-being of our students, students in grades K-8 will not be refused a meal, even if their student meal account has a negative balance. K-8 students with a negative balance student meal account will receive an alternate healthy meal. The alternative healthy meal will be charged to the student's meal account that will affect the negative balance.
- Students in high school will not be permitted to charge a meal if the student meal account has a negative balance.
- Families may apply for free or reduced price meals at any time during the school year. Families are responsible for student meal account charges made before the free or reduced price meal application is approved – the approval is not retroactive to the beginning of the school year.

### **Reimbursable Meals and Other Meal Purchases**

#### For students with free lunch status

- A qualifying student will receive one free school lunch every day that meets the USDA Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA) guidelines.
- Second meals, a la carte and snack bar items are available to be purchased only if the student's meal account has a positive account balance.
- Families are responsible for student meal account balance and charges that were incurred prior to approval of free school meal status.

#### For students with reduced price lunch status

- A qualifying student, with a positive student meal account balance, will receive one reduced price lunch every day that meets the USDA HHFKA guidelines.

- If a K-8 student's meal account has a negative balance, they will receive an alternate reimbursable meal and the student's meal account will be charged.
- A high school student will only receive a meal if their meal account has a positive balance or if the student pays with cash.
- Second meals, a la carte and snack bar items are available to be purchased only if the student's meal account has a positive account balance.
- Families are responsible for student meal account balances and charges that were incurred prior to approval of reduced price meal status.

For students with full price lunch status

- If a K-8 student's meal account has a negative balance, they will receive an alternate reimbursable meal and the student meal account will be charged.
- A high school student will only receive a meal if their student meal account has a positive balance or if they pay with cash.
- Second meals, a la carte and snack bar items are available to be purchased only if the student's meal account has a positive account balance.

**Student Meal Account Payments**

- We encourage families to make payments for school meals through MealTime Online or at the school with cash or check. There is a nominal fee for using the MealTime Online payment option. This fee is a processing fee and does not benefit the District. Payments through MealTime Online may take 1-2 business days to reflect the credit.
- By using MealTime Online, you can review the student's purchase history and school meal account balance and make payments. You can also apply for free or reduced price meal status.
- The District will send out low balance and negative account balance reminders using an automated telephone call through School Messenger and by email.
- Parents/guardians can request a restriction on the student's meal account by emailing [Vailfoodservice@vailschooldistrict.org](mailto:Vailfoodservice@vailschooldistrict.org). You can restrict or deny the purchase of a la carte items, limit the daily transactions, or set a dollar cap on the student's daily school meal purchases.
- Payments for elementary and middle school students will be accepted at school. Payments for high school students will be accepted either by the

kitchen manager or at the point of sale. Payments should clearly indicate the account to which the funds should be credited, e.g., if a parent/guardian has multiple children at one school the payment must indicate which student's account should be credited and the amount to be credited to that student's account.

- The school will credit meal payments to student's accounts before the meal period. Schools will apply payments to the purchase of the current day's meal first, and payment to the negative or delinquent account balance second.
- Personal checks will not be accepted from parents/guardians who have previously provided a check that was returned from their bank for any reason, including insufficient funds. If the parent/guardian with a returned check does not provide reimbursement in cash or by money order within seven (7) business days from the date of notice, the matter will be referred to District Administration.
- The district's school meal program is subject to federally mandated cost principles which state that bad debts, including losses arising from uncollectable accounts and related collection and legal costs are unallowed, meaning the school district is prohibited from extending a line of credit for a negative student meal account.
- Accordingly, the district must use all reasonable collection efforts, including the use of a collection agency, in order to ensure that parents/guardians pay for their students' school meals.

### **Identification and Notification of Delinquent Student Meal Accounts**

- Schools will identify student meal accounts that do not have adequate balances to pay for student meals. Before the end of each school day, the school's kitchen manager will run a negative account balance report and provide a copy to the school principal.
- Parents/guardians will be notified with the District's in-house email notification system, School Messenger, when their students' meal account has a low balance and/or when the student meal account has a negative balance.
- The district will also personally call the parent(s) or guardian(s) and/or send letters when the student's meal account becomes delinquent (has a negative balance), the parent/ guardian must respond to the phone call and/or letter within seven (7) business days.
- Accounts that are delinquent by \$35.00 or more and/or the parent(s) or guardian(s) have not responded to the district's phone calls and/or letters, will be sent a final written notice to bring the student's meal account current. The final notice will inform the parent/guardian that if the student's

meal account balance is not brought current, the account will be sent to a collection agency.

- If the student's meal account is sent to a collection agency, the parent(s) or guardian(s) will be responsible for the collection costs, including but not limited to, the delinquent student's meal account amount, collection agency fees, attorney fees, and court costs.
- If an account is delinquent at the end of the school year the delinquent amount will be rolled over to the next school year. The district may withhold a student's grade or report card, at the principal's discretion, until a negative student meal account balance is brought current.
- If a student repeatedly does not have money in his or her student meal account, and no meals are sent from home for the student, school administration will consider circumstances in the home and may contact the district's student services staff and/or the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS).
- For any questions concerning negative balances, delinquent student meal accounts, or for assistance with the free or reduced price meal application please contact Vail School District Food Services at [Vailfoodservice@vailschooldistrict.org](mailto:Vailfoodservice@vailschooldistrict.org) or call Cynthia Griego at 520-879-2015 or Linda Millman at 520-879-2072.

### **School Procedures for Students with Insufficient or Negative Account Balances**

- Kitchen staff and school employees will exercise sensitivity and confidentiality in serving students who have low or negative balance student meal accounts. No district employee will subject a student to embarrassment or humiliation based on the balance of his or her student meal account.
- If a student's meal account balance is inadequate to pay for the entire meal, the school will provide K-8 students with a healthy alternative to the menued school lunch and the meal account will be charged. High school students will not be permitted to charge any part of a student meal if the charge will result in a negative balance.

### **Requesting a Refund**

- If a student has withdrawn from school, parents/guardians may submit a written request to the district's food service department for a refund of any money remaining in their child's meal account. Please email [Vail foodservice@vailschooldistrict.org](mailto:Vailfoodservice@vailschooldistrict.org).
- If a student is graduating or leaving the district, parents/guardians may contact the district's food service department for meal account balances,

and to request a refund. Any unused balance can also be transferred to a sibling's meal account upon request.

**Statement of Non-Discrimination**

- No person shall, on the basis of race, color national origin, age, gender, disability, sex, religion, reprisal, or income, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any child nutrition program or activity.
- There will be no physical segregation of, nor any discrimination against, any student because of his or her inability to pay the full price of the student meal, or due to his or her eligibility for free or reduced price meals.
- The names of students eligible to receive free or reduced price meals shall not be published, posted, or announced in any manner, and there shall be no overt identification of any such students by any means.
- No district employee may deny a meal benefit to any child as a disciplinary action.