

Buena Park School District
Nutrition Services
Meal Charge Policy

I. Purpose

Buena Park School District's goal is to provide students with healthy meals to support wellness and academic success. The District is committed to feed every student whether a child has money in their account or not. While parent/guardians are required to maintain a positive meal account balance there are times a student needs a meal and is fed without money in their account. Nutrition Services graciously feeds every student who enters the meal service line but paying the unpaid account balance is the responsibility of the parent not the District nor Nutrition Services. Unpaid charges place a financial burden on our District and Nutrition Services Department. The District is required to insure compliance with federal reporting for the USDA Child Nutrition Program and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances. The intent of this policy is to establish uniform meal account procedures throughout the District.

II. Policy

Students whose parent or guardian have unpaid school meal balance shall not be shamed, treated differently, or served a meal that differs from what students whose parent or guardian maintains a positive school meal balance would receive. Student account balances are the responsibility of the parents and therefore students shall not be told of any unpaid debt.

A. Students are required to take a complete breakfast and lunch.

- Complete breakfast consists of at least 3 of the following items: meat/meat alternate, grain, milk, fruit or vegetable. Students are required to take at least one fruit or vegetable.
- Complete lunch consists of at least 3 of the following different components: meat/meat alternate, grain, milk, fruit or vegetable. Students are required to take at least one fruit or vegetable.

B. Every student who enters the meal line is served a complete breakfast or lunch no matter their account balance. Paid meal charges for lunch are \$3.00 at all schools and the breakfast price is \$2.00 at all schools. Students who qualify for reduced-priced meals have a meal charge of \$.00 for lunch and \$.00 for breakfast at all schools. Students who qualify for free meals receive lunch and breakfast at no charge. Meal charges are deducted from a student account balance.

C. Parent or guardians are responsible to maintain a positive balance and to pay any negative balance that has accumulated. At the end of year, unpaid balances follows the student and remains the responsibility of the parent of guardian.

D. Students with a positive balance are allowed to purchase a-la-carte items that consist of individually purchased milk, water, 100% juice, smart snacks, etc. Students with a negative balance are not allowed to purchase a-la-carte items or second meals, even with cash payments, until the account balance is paid in full.

E. School cafeterias possess computerized point of sale/cash register systems that maintain records of meals purchased, money deposited and spent. Account balance records are available by emailing Accounting Child Nutrition AccountingChildNutrition@BPSD.K12.CA.US

F. Parent or guardians have three options to pay for meals. Money may be added to students' account by paying at the District Office, paying at school, or sending student with cash or check payable to Buena Park School District-Nutrition Services.

- Parent or guardians paying at the District office address 6885 Orangethorpe Ave Buena Park Ca. 90620, may pay by Cash or Check. Please have the student name, and ID#
- Parent or guardians paying at school with cash or check may obtain a pre-payment envelope next to the lunch deposit box in the school's front office. Parents or guardians write the information requested on the envelope, place the money in the envelope, and deposit the envelope in the lunch deposit box.
- Students paying with cash or check give the money to cafeteria staff during meal service. Nutrition Services recommends placing the cash or check in an envelope with the amount, date, student name, and ID# written on the front. Money received by students in excess of meal cost is deposited into account unless the student requests change and the cafeterias have the change available. Further details are available on our website at www.bpsd.k12.ca.us.

G. Nutrition Services notifies parent or guardians of the student's negative meal balance account no later than 10 days after the student's meal account has reached a negative balance. Nutrition Services attempts to directly certify students monthly for free or reduced-price meals. If Nutrition Services is not able to directly certify the student, Nutrition Services provides online applications by linking to our website at www.bpsd.k12.ca.us

H. Parent or guardians must update changes to their phone, home address, and email at the school site to assure account balance notifications are sent to the appropriate location. Students shall not be informed of their account balance in the lunch line or at school unless requested by the student.

I. Student accounts are charged the non-sufficient funds (NSF) fee of \$25 when checks written to Nutrition Services are returned by the bank.

J. Parents have 90 days to dispute any charges they believe are invalid. After investigating the dispute Nutrition Services will make any correction if necessary. After

90 days our financial records are submitted to the state and we are unable to make changes.

III. Financial Impact on District

Senate Bill 250 requires districts to serve a reimbursable meal to students whether money is available to pay or not. The District staunchly supports this Bill and believes that every student needs a healthy meal to perform at their highest level, however, unpaid meal balances impact District financials, personnel time, and other resources. To avoid using District resources to collect unpaid meal balances, parents are encouraged to maintain a positive student account throughout the year. Parents are responsible to pay for their child's unpaid meals.

Sincerely,

Katrina Butler, CCN, PN, CPFHT

Director of Child Nutrition Services

Buena Park School District