

Breakfast/Lunch Program Information and Meal Purchasing Procedures

Welcome to the Columbia Public Schools' (CPS) cafeterias! This document is meant to assist our families with understanding how the school district serves meals. Nutrition Services has a computerized cashiering system at all schools. All students enrolled in CPS are automatically assigned access to a student debit account to purchase and to pay for lunch, breakfast, dinner at 3 high schools, and/or a la carte items. Money may be deposited into a student's account so that it is available each time a student eats and allows the student to move through the lines quickly. Students may choose to pay cash daily to our cashiers, however, students bringing cash to school is discouraged due to potential loss. Columbia Public Schools will not be responsible for any deposits or lost funds not given directly to the Nutrition Services Department whether cash or check. As a convenience, parents/guardians may view student purchases and deposit money online.

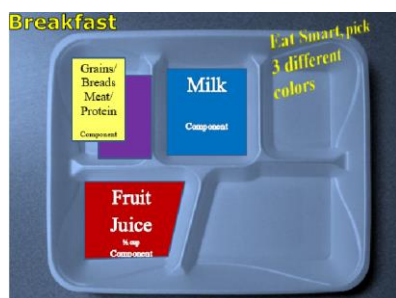
Parental/Guardian account access to child(ren) meal information:

- Parents/guardians may review and/or pay for student purchases via MySchoolBucks at www.MySchoolBucks.com. NOTE: MySchoolBucks will be disabled if a student is not actively enrolled in the current session. Funding or deficit in the account will remain.
- Parents/guardians may also fill out a free and reduced-price meal application to receive free or reduced priced meals for their student at: <http://www.cpsk12.org/nutrition>. **Free and reduced-price meal applications are accepted all year long.**
- Parents/guardians may pay for student meals in the school cafeteria, but only to Nutrition Services personnel and;
- Lastly, payments and account review can be made through the Nutrition Services office at 1818 W. Worley Street, Columbia, MO 65203 or via phone at 573-214-3480 12 months out of the year during office hours. Holidays and district closings are excluded.

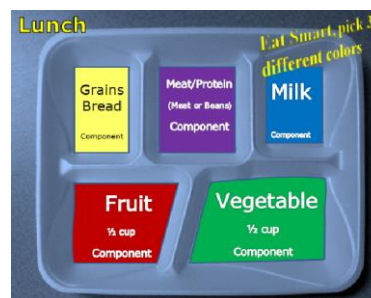
All students use their assigned personal identification number to access their meal account. This identification number will be typed into a keypad by the student at the cashier stand after obtaining a meal. Kindergarten students are encouraged to practice using their individual student identification number to move through the lunch lines efficiently.

All meals with a complete number of components are federally subsidized and therefore monitored for minimum amounts on a student's tray by the cashier. The following is a list of components:

- **Students must select 3 components at each meal:** During breakfast, 4 items are offered covering 3 components and during lunch 5 components are offered. Students may have all 4 for breakfast and all 5 for lunch. A mandatory component is a fruit or a vegetable. Without one, a student will not pass inspection for completeness and may be charged higher a la carte prices per item or sent back to obtain a missing component.



- Grains
- Meat/Protein
- Fruit
- Vegetable
- Milk



These posters are found in all cafeterias to assist students with selections.

Free, Reduced-Price and Full-Price Meals

Annually all households by regulation will receive a free and reduced-price application to the address or e-mail listed on file in our Student Information System (SIS). Applications for meal benefits must be submitted every year to maintain meal benefits from July 1 through June 30. Income guidelines change every July 1st. Eligibility begins as of the date parents place on the application or within 60 days of a federal claim if date is beyond 2 months. Applications are accepted all year long.

All students without free meal benefits selecting a meal without money in their account will have the full-price or reduced-price meal charge added to their account. Households are responsible for all student charges incurred prior to free meal benefit approval.

All households who apply for benefits will be notified by mail whether approved or denied. If a student is missing from the meal benefit notification, contact Nutrition Services immediately to have that student added to the application to avoid unnecessary meal charges. All accumulated charges are the responsibility of the parent/guardian of the student. Columbia Public Schools reserves the right to pursue payment of unpaid charges with a third-party collection agency. Please see the new *Student Charges and Delinquent Meal Accounts* section for details.

Meal Prices are updated July 1st of every year, please visit the Nutrition Services' website for updates www.cpsk12.org/nutrition

Parents are welcome to eat meals with their children.

Student Charges and Delinquent Meal Accounts and Charge Procedures

A complete lunch must consist of at least 3 of the 5 components offered: Whole Grains, Meat/Protein Substitute, Fruit, Vegetable, and Milk. A complete breakfast consists of 3 components offered: Grain or Protein item (2 offered daily), fruit/vegetable, and milk. All students are required to take a fruit or vegetable at both lunch and breakfast or will be charged a la carte prices. A la carte purchases are strictly prohibited if a student does not have money in his or her account or if the account balance is negative, regardless of cash in hand. Milk or juice-only purchases are considered an a la carte purchase. Nutrition Services will provide low funds letters for teachers to send home with student's grades K-5 on a weekly basis when a student reaches a *positive* \$7.00. Courtesy automated phone calls will also go out to all households with **any** negative meal account balances weekly.

Students who go through the meal line to obtain a complete meal will not be denied a meal for any reason. There is no alternate meal for delinquent accounts. All students receive the same meal offer regardless of account balance. The only exception to this rule pertains to seniors in the month of May who have delinquent meal accounts prior to graduation. Seniors will be denied meals the last 2 weeks of school and diploma will be withheld if meal account is delinquent at graduation.

Special Note: Secondary students (grades 6-12) will be informed of their account balances upon request and/or if they inquire about why they are unable to obtain extra meal items due to account deficits.

Important Information: Students will only be allowed to charge a maximum of 5 lunches and breakfasts combined before an *additional* automated message is generated to all households with a deficit account of negative \$25.00. Accounts with any deficit are considered delinquent. Immediate payment in full is required to avoid further action.

All delinquent accounts exceeding a negative \$50.00 will be turned over to a third-party debt recovery service and is considered bad debt. Once delinquent debt is turned over to a debt recovery service, interest fees and court fees associated with law suits may be charged if bad debt is not resolved in a timely manner. Columbia Public Schools has chosen a debt recovery service that is sensitive to our families' needs and will set up a payment plan if needed.

Once a delinquent account is turned over to a 3rd party collection service, payments must be directed to the 3rd party service to avoid account confusion. Any payments made to Columbia Public Schools after being turned over to the 3rd party collection service will be added to the student's account for future purchases and **will not** be applied to outstanding bad debt without explicit instructions with payment to do so.

All communications sent home are sent using the student information on file with the District. Please keep all student contact information up to date to receive important information. Failure to receive these notices does not negate parental/guardian responsibility for negative meal balances.

Meal Account Refunds:

Refunds of \$10 are only issued in person in the Nutrition Services office at 1818 West Worley Street, Columbia. Amounts over \$10.00 must be requested and will be mailed to the address on file for the parent/guardian. Refunds may take up to 4 weeks to process. Families who plan to leave the District at years end are encouraged to make plans for refunds that may include the address of their new residence or make an early request. Overseas payments will take significantly longer to receive.

Food Allergies

If your child has a food allergy that requires a food substitution in the cafeteria, a physician's order is required that includes foods to be eliminated and a list of acceptable substitutions. The student's physician must fill out and sign the Medical Statement for Students to Request Special Meals form found on the CPS Nutrition Services' website www.cpsk12.org/nutrition or call 573-214-3480 to have a copy mailed or faxed to a physician. Due to large numbers of students, Nutrition Services cashiers will be unable to monitor for student religious or lifestyle preferences that are not physician ordered. However, updated menus and ingredient information can be found on the Nutrition Services' website to assist families with meal selections daily.

All foods sold to students during the school day are under the scrutiny of USDA's National School Lunch Program Regulations which were created to promote high standards for all foods available to children. Columbia Public Schools strictly adheres to research-based nutrition regulations geared toward targeting nutrients deficient and excesses in the U.S. American diet.

For more information regarding school meals, please contact the Nutrition Services office at (573) 214-3480, lunch@cpsk12.org or log on to the Nutrition Services' website: www.cpsk12.org/nutrition.