

## MEAL CHARGE POLICY

The Milton Public School System participates in the National School Lunch Program sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) which permits the school system to offer free and reduced priced meals to students who qualify. Families who wish to apply for free or reduced meals must complete an application each year. The family of any Milton Public school student may submit an application at any time during the school year. Applications are available in each school's main office, at the food service office and online at [www.miltonps.org](http://www.miltonps.org)

### STUDENT ACCOUNTS

Any student whose school meal account has a zero or negative balance **will be allowed to charge a reimbursable meal and/or a milk**. A "reimbursable meal" is defined as a meal consisting of at least three (3) of the five (5) offered meal components (grain, meat or meat alternative, fruit, vegetable and milk) and must include a fruit and/or vegetable component. This will result in a negative balance on the student's account until funds are added to the student's account.

Families will be notified weekly by the food service program if their account is negative. The food service program will work together with the school administration in a joint effort to contact students/parents to assist with collections.

Student with a negative account balance will not be allowed to purchase a la carte items until the student's account is in good standing. "Good standing" for the purchase of a la carte items is defined as an account with a positive balance.

If a student is without money on a consistent basis, the administration may investigate the situation to see if a financial hardship exists. Parents and families are encouraged to apply for free or reduced price meals for their child/ren.

#### Payment Options

The Milton School Food Service Program offers an online payment option as well as a payment by check. Our online website is [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com)

We encourage our families to pre-pay for meals at the paid or reduced price rate to help to ensure children have consistent access to meals without accruing unpaid meal charges. This pre-payment system includes a feature to allow for parental restrictions limiting a child's spending at the point of service. For example, the system could allow families to place specific limits on à la carte purchases. Families can contact the food service office for further information. We also accept checks at all six of our schools. We have locked mail boxes in the cafeteria and main office of each school. Checks should be made out to the Milton School Food Service Program.

### Online Payment

We allow families to add money to their child's account from a computer or mobile device which makes payment more convenient for families.

Often, even families who do not opt to pay using the online system can access the system to check their child's account balance. Many families may not realize how much their child is spending in the cafeteria each day, especially if the child is purchasing à la carte items in addition to their reimbursable breakfast and lunch. We encourage families to regularly check their account balance and track their child's spending can help prevent households from accruing unpaid meal charges.

### Automatic Payment

We also offer online payment platforms that include an optional feature families may use to automatically add money to their account when they reach a set dollar amount. Families using these systems may also set up a "low balance warning" to ensure they are notified promptly when a payment is needed.

### Refunds:

Refunds for a student withdrawing and/or for graduating seniors require a written request (email, postal or in person) for a refund of any money remaining in a student's account. Without a note graduating seniors will have any remaining funds transferred to a sibling's account or they may donate to a student in need.

The Milton Public Schools will work together with all of the fee based programs and activities. At the end of each school year students with an outstanding food bill above (\$20.00) will not be allowed to register for any fee based program until the food balance has been paid off.

### Policy Communications

This policy shall be communicated to all staff and families at the beginning of each school year and to families transferring to the district during the school year.

Legal Refs: MGL 71:72; USDA School Meal Program Guidelines May 2017

CROSS REFS: JQ, Student Fees, Fines and Charges

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