

Food Program Meal Charge Policy

The **Benson Elementary Schools'** food service program is committed to providing the opportunity for all students to access nutritious meals in a cost effective manner. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the food services department.

It is the expectation of our organization that:

- Meals will be paid for either in advance or with cash at the register daily.
- Parents will honor their responsibility to provide meals for their children and will ensure that money is deposited into the child's individual meal account.
- Parents will maintain their children's food service account throughout the year.

In recognition of the fact that students may occasionally forget their money and that this can be both embarrassing and stressful for students, this policy sets forth the procedures for handling meal charges while being both sensitive to student needs and mindful of the fiscal responsibilities of the school meals program.

- Parents and/or guardians are expected to keep track of student balances.
- Families are strongly encouraged to apply for the free and reduced price meal program. Applications will be processed in a timely manner. All information is kept confidential and students receiving free/reduced meals will not be identifiable when they receive their meals.
- Students eligible for free meals may receive **one** breakfast and **one** lunch per day.
- Students eligible for reduced price meals may receive **one** free breakfast and **one** lunch per day.
- Extra meal items and a la carte items are not part of the USDA Free and Reduced meals program and are not allowed to be charged.
- Extra meal items and a la carte items **may not be charged**. A student must have money in his/her account to purchase extra meals or a la carte items.

Meal Charge Policy:

Students who do not have money in their accounts or who do not bring money for meals will be permitted to charge meals up to a maximum amount of \$10 under the following conditions.

When the account balance is approximately \$5.00 the Food Service Management Company will do as follows:

1. Parent/guardian will be contacted by phone.
2. A letter will be sent home with the student and **the principal or his/her designee** will be given a copy of the letter.
3. Payment will be required the next day.

When the \$10 maximum charge limit is met the Food Service Management Company will communicate this to the principal or his/her designee and the following will occur:

1. The student will be asked if he/she has money for meals at the beginning of the school day by the principal or his/her designee. If the child does not have money, a reimbursable emergency meal will be provided to the student. Example of emergency meal would be a cheese sandwich + veggie sticks + fruit + milk.
2. Only one emergency meal will be provided to a student at the cost of a full price meal.
3. It will be expected that the student will bring meals from home.
4. The food service manager and the principal or his/her designee will monitor the student during meal periods to make certain the student is receiving meals provided by the parents/ guardians.
5. The food service manager in conjunction with the principal or his/her designee will determine if further action is warranted.

All Students

Some cases of repeated charges may be investigated by the school liaison/counselor or other authorized person to help establish eligibility for free and reduced price meals.

The **Benson Elementary** School Board recognizes that if a parent fails to provide for the nourishment of his/her child during the school day either by applying for free and reduced meals or by making the necessary provisions for the purchase of school meals, then this may be evidence of abuse or neglect, and that may constitute grounds for the principal or his/her designee to file a report and notify the Department for Children and Families