



General McLane School District
Food Services Administrative Guidelines
Student Meal Charges

January 2020

Meal Payment Guidelines

I. Purpose

The General McLane School District Board of Directors has adopted Food Services Policy 808 which reflects the Board's desire to provide students with healthy, reasonably priced meals in accordance with the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 and the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs. The Food Services Policy also reflects the Board's general expectation that students, staff and visitors ("patrons") will either establish a prepaid account or use cash/checks to pay for meals. However, the Board realizes students may need to purchase meals on account in certain *limited* circumstances. Therefore, the Food Services Policy includes provisions which allow the Food Services Department to set dollar limits for student accounts and time limits for payment. This policy reflects all requirements in accordance with Act 55 of 2017 (including revisions) to the Pennsylvania School Code.

Unpaid meal accounts are a financial burden on the District, the GM Food Services Program and district taxpayers. In order to reduce the amount of unpaid accounts and relieve the financial burden the following guidelines are in place effective immediately. These guidelines are in accordance with all USDA requirements in regards to federal accounting, reporting, and oversight with regards to the collection of outstanding student balances.

The goal is to enact uniform accounting and collection procedures throughout General McLane School District while following all Federal and State laws when providing meals to students with no funds available on their accounts.

II. Definitions

- A. A la Carte – Food or beverages which are not part of a Breakfast or Lunch and may or may not meet U.S.D.A. nutrition requirements but are nonetheless available for purchase.
- B. Account – A student's balance of money held by the District's Food Services Program and available to purchase food or beverages in the cafeteria.
- C. Alternate Meal – A sandwich and beverage (milk or juice) available to a student whose Account is at or below negative \$50.00.

II. Definitions (continued)

- D. Breakfast or Lunch – a meal listed on the District’s published menu which must meet U.S.D.A. nutrition requirements.
- E. Extras – Includes a la Carte items, Second Meals and Snacks
- F. SchoolCafe – A website which parents/guardians may use to add money to a student’s Account and to view a student’s food/beverage purchases.
- G. Second meals – any food or beverage selected in addition to a Breakfast or Lunch.
- H. Snacks – Items such as cookies, potato chips and ice cream which may or may not meet U.S.D.A. nutrition requirements.
- I. U.S.D.A. – United States Department of Agriculture

III. District Guidelines

The District’s standard practice is to provide a Breakfast or Lunch to a student regardless of his/her ability to pay or the balance on his/her cafeteria account. A student who wishes to select Extras must have money in his/her Account or cash/check in hand at the cash register.

Certain parents/guardians may want to limit charges to a student’s Account. For example, a parent/guardian may want to pack a breakfast or lunch for a student and ask the district to not provide these meals to the student. Or, a parent/guardian may want to prohibit a student from purchasing any Extras.

District personnel will use best efforts to honor a parent’s/guardian’s wishes. If a parent/guardian provides a written request to the Food Services Manager, he/she will share the request with the building Principal. The Principal or his/her designee will meet privately with the student(s) to discuss the request and to verify the student(s) understanding. Despite the District’s best efforts, a student might still incur charges to his/her Account and the parent/guardian is ultimately responsible for those charges.

Students Approved for Free Meals

Any student who has been approved for free meals will be permitted to receive a Breakfast and Lunch at no charge. However, he/she must have money in his/her Account or cash/check in hand for Extras at the time of selection. He/she will not be allowed to charge Extras to his/her Account if the balance is below zero.

Students Approved for Reduced Price Meals

Students who have been approved for reduced price meals will be allowed to receive a Breakfast for \$.30 and Lunch for \$.40 each day. Parents/guardians may add money to a student's Account electronically at www.schoolcafe.com or with cash/check in hand at the cash register.

If a student's Account balance falls below zero, he/she will not be allowed to select Extras. The student will only be offered a Breakfast or Lunch and a beverage (milk or juice). The price for this meal will be at the reduced rate and will be charged to the student's Account.

Full-Pay Students

Students who are not approved for free or reduced meals will pay the District's published standard rates for food and beverages. Parents/guardians may add money to the student's account electronically at www.schoolcafe.com or with cash/check in hand at the cash register.

If a student's Account balance is below zero, the student will not be permitted to select Extras. The student will only be offered a Breakfast or Lunch and a beverage (milk or juice). The published standard meal price will be charged to the student's Account.

IV. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

Parents and guardians are responsible to pay the General McLane School District Food Service Program for their child(ren)'s food and beverage selections. Parents/guardians or students may pay for food and beverage selections in advance at www.schoolcafe.com (there is a minimal service fee for using this method of payment), by checks made out to General McLane School District Food Services Fund, or with cash given to a cashier. Funds should be maintained consistently to avoid having your child go without meal money on any given day. Funds carry over from year to year.

If a student's Account balance falls below zero, the District will send notices home with the student, to the email address on record, or to the home address on record. These notices will be sent using the three tier process described below.

IMPORTANT: The District will offer an Alternate Meal to a student at any time in the tiered process if/when the balance in the student's Account is at or below negative \$50.00. The cost of the Alternate Meal will be charged to the student's Account.

Tier 1 – If a student's Account balance is below negative \$10.00 for at least five (5) days, the Food Services Manager will send a letter or email to request funds, to highlight District policies, to provide options for payment, and to outline the financial assistance resources available.

Tier 2 – If a student's Account balance remains below negative \$10.00 for ten (10) days after a Tier 1 letter/email was sent, the Director of Business and Operations will send a certified letter to request payment. If the account is made positive and reaches an amount of -\$50.00 or less Tier 3 will be initiated.

Tier 3 - If a student's Account balance remains at or below -\$50.00 for ten (10) days after a Tier 2 certified letter was sent, the District reserves the right to file a private criminal complaint with the Office of the District Attorney at which time the parent/guardian may be responsible for administrative fees and court costs in addition to the balance on the student's Account.

V. **Miscellaneous Provisions**

Checks Returned for Insufficient funds – The District will deduct bank fees for returned checks from the student's Account.

Refunds for withdrawn and graduating students will be given upon receipt of a **written request** from the parent or guardian. An email request is acceptable. Students who are graduating have the option of transferring remaining funds to a sibling's account or donate the funds to help a family with a delinquent account.

Unclaimed Funds must be requested by the end of the current school year. Any funds not claimed by the end of the current school year become property of the General McLane Food Service Program.

Negative Account Balances will be collected in accordance with guidance set forth in this document and subject to Board approved policies and procedures.

Bad Debts will be handled in accordance with USDA memo SP 46-2016 and District policy.

Gifts and Donations will be deposited into an account separate from the Food Service account. These monies will be used to offset delinquent student meal accounts in accordance with 2 CFR, Part 200.

Each school cafeteria has a computerized point of sale (cash register) system. These systems maintain records of all meals purchased, cash received, and account balances which are available at www.schoolcafe.com for your review. The Food Service Manager can provide this information to you if you do not have internet access.

If a student is consistently without meal money, the District reserves the right to investigate and take allowable action to rectify the situation. If financial hardship exists, parents and guardians are strongly encouraged to complete a *confidential* Free and Reduced Meal Application. These applications are available at all district school offices, from the Food Service Manager, and at www.compass.state.pa.us. The Food Service Manager is also available to discuss your situation and help identify sources for temporary assistance.

All the information in this packet along with other food service news is available on our web page at www.generalmclane.net.