

August 3, 2020

Re: **Nutrition Services Meal Charge Policy School Year 2020-2021**

Dear Families,

Outlined here is our Meal Charge Policy and valuable information regarding the meal application process for the National School Lunch Program.

No child shall be denied food. We offer Universal Breakfast at all school sites, providing free breakfast to all students (TK - 12) each day we are open for school. Students who arrive late to school will have access to a "second chance breakfast" either in the classroom or in the cafeteria.

Students who do not have money or who have charges on their meal account will continue to have the same access as everyone else; students will not be denied a hot meal, nor limited in their food choices, or otherwise treated differently, identified and/or shamed for not having money at the time of service. Students may charge their meal, and families will be required to pay for all meals accrued on their students' account.

For Families with Meal Charges:

- Families will be notified within 10 business days of unpaid meal charges. Payment is due upon request.
- If the account remains unpaid, the family will continue to receive notifications until the last day of school.
- For families with large negative balances, Nutrition Services will devise a re-payment plan that includes manageable installments. Please contact NS to arrange a suitable plan for your family at (510) 644-6200.

Meal charges can be paid for in the following ways:

- online at EZSchoolPay.com
- at your child's school in the cafeteria
- at the Nutrition Services Office at 1720 Oregon Street
- through the US mail

In addition to receiving this letter, a copy of this letter will be posted on EZSchoolPay.com, on the Nutrition Services website, in the school cafeteria and will be included in the notification that families receive for unpaid meal charges on their student's account.

Please see reverse side for important information regarding the free/reduced price meal application process.

National School Lunch Program Meal Application Process

Every school year, families who would like to join the National School Lunch Program to qualify for free lunch based on family income are required to submit a new meal application. Here's what you need to know:

- New applications are available July 1 through June 30 of each school year, and are available in English and Spanish.
- Even if your family had been on the program the previous school year, a new application must be submitted, or your family will be dropped from the program on October 1.
- Only one application is needed per family, even if family members attend different schools.
- The district requests that all families consider applying, even if you do not intend to take advantage of the lunch program because every qualified application counts towards bringing additional federal and state funding support to our schools based on the income of our students' families. Also, if your family's income decreases during the year, please consider filling out a new application as you may qualify for the program.
- The easiest and quickest way to apply is online: <https://secure.ezmealapp.com/ApplicationScreen.aspx> There will be a verification number provided at the end of the online process. Please print out and keep the confirmation page to reference for tracking your application.
- Please look for the Notification of Eligibility letter and keep it for your records as this letter may be used to receive other benefits for families who qualify (reduced prices on tests, yearbooks, graduation tickets, etc).
- If you do not receive a Notification of Eligibility letter within 10 days of submitting your application, please contact our office for more information at (510) 644-6200. It is possible that the NS does not have the correct address on file or the application was "kicked back" due to incompleteness.
- *Do not assume you qualify* for benefits until your family receives notification in the mail informing you of your child's eligibility status (eligible or not eligible).
- If your family receives a Notification of Eligibility letter that states your student is Paid (ineligible for free lunch) and you believe this to be in error, contact Nutrition Services to discuss the application with the Director of Nutrition Services (Bonnie Christensen, 1720 Oregon Street, Berkeley. 510-644-6200).
- **Family and student confidentiality is protected** by your right to privacy; information obtained during the free and reduced-price school meals eligibility process may not be shared with other government agencies or individuals outside Nutrition Services' office. Only a student's parents or legal guardians may request information regarding that student's account or application.

Please visit our website at www.berkeleyschools.net/departments/nutrition-services for links to our menu calendar, as well as another copy of this letter and other information regarding the National School Lunch Program.

Thank you so much for your participation in our program. We are proud of the healthy and delicious food we serve, and appreciate the opportunity to support the daily lives and education of our students.

Best,
Bonnie Christensen, Director of Nutrition Services

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.