

Mercer County Special Services School District

School Nutrition Program Negative Balance Procedures

In order to provide students and parents/guardians in the Mercer County Special Services School District with the best possible service, clarity, and accountability surrounding the school nutrition program, the following procedures regarding student meal account balances will be followed:

1. The Mercer County Special Services School District and Sodexo Food Service encourage parents/guardians to pre-pay meals for their children, thereby eliminating situations that could develop during mealtime over negative balances. Pre-payments for breakfast and lunch can be made via cash or check (**made payable to Mercer County Special Services School District**).
2. Students wanting a meal and not having money to purchase a meal will be allowed to charge a meal, with repayment expected **within 10 school days**. Notification will be made by the school principal or designee when a student's account is in arrears.
3. Students may charge their accounts only for a reimbursable meal or milk – **students will not be permitted to charge a la carte items or an extra meal**.
4. If the student's negative balance has not been addressed by the parents/guardians within the ten (10) day period, the principal or designee will reach out to the parents/guardians with a second notice informing the parents/guardians of any action to be taken by the school in response to the student's meal account being in arrears. **Such action may include denying the student school breakfast or lunch**.
5. If a parent/guardian has not made payment within one full week from the date of the second notice, they will be requested to meet with the Principal or designee to discuss and resolve the matter.
6. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to submit free/reduced meal application forms yearly, as well as, when their household information or income changes. Applications can be submitted at any time and are available during registration, from the student's school building, as well as, on the district's website: <https://www.mcssid.info/school-lunch-program>. Free/reduced applications will also become a part of all paperwork provided to families of students transferring to Mercer County Special Services School. While MCSSSD and Sodexo strongly encourage families to apply for free/reduced meal benefits, the final application responsibility lies with the parents/guardians.
7. Both the MCSSSD and Sodexo are committed to providing meals to students who choose to participate in the program. However, there is a responsibility on the part of the students and parents/guardians to satisfy all financial obligations to the lunch program in a timely manner.
8. The school Principal or designee has the option to take further action as outlined in **MCSSSD Policy P8550**. Please refer to the district website under district policies for more details.

Questions regarding the school policy and the above noted procedures should be direct to your child's school principal or the MCSSSD School Business Administrator, Deborah Donnelly on at 609-631-2103.

Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**
Program.Intake@usda.gov

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