

Tahoma School District 409 Meal Charge Policy

Tahoma School District provides a nutrition program for students that offers breakfast and lunch meals. There may be times when students have insufficient funds to purchase school meals. This policy is designed to address those situations. Students may receive breakfast and lunch at no cost to them if they are eligible for free meal benefits. Children who do not qualify for free meals may purchase a meal at a subsidized cost, at either the reduced price or paid rate. Parents/guardians are responsible for paying for all school meals served to their child(ren), including meals that were served prior to qualifying for free or reduced-price meals. Effective July 1, 2017, the District is required to implement a meal-charge policy and communicate to families and school staff how it will handle situations where children have insufficient funds to pay for school meals. Per United States Department of Agriculture regulations, the meal charge policy must be communicated at the beginning of each school year to inform families and school staff and to promote effective financial management of the school meal programs.

Charging Limits

Elementary students in grades kindergarten through 5 who do not have money in their cafeteria account or in hand to cover the cost of the meal at the time of meal service may charge meals and owe up to \$8.25. Secondary students in grades 6 through 12 who do not have money in their cafeteria account or in hand to cover the cost of the meal at the time of meal service may charge meals and owe up to \$3.50.

Alternate Meals

The District is opting to provide an alternate meal including a cheese sandwich and milk at no cost to elementary and secondary students when the charge limit is reached. Alternate meals are offered at breakfast and lunch.

Negative Balance Notification

During the school year, the District will notify families via email on a daily basis when their children have a negative balance. School food service professionals are required to keep low and negative balances confidential. Therefore, the District may not enlist the assistance of unauthorized persons such as parent volunteers to follow up with payment reminders and debt collection. The food services office staff communicates account balances and payment reminders directly to parents/guardians over the phone or via email.

Debt Collection

The District is required to maintain records related to meal charging, debt collection and bad debt. Negative balances remain on students' accounts until they are paid off. Negative balances must be paid off by the end of each school year. Unpaid meal charges may not be carried over to the next school year. Food services will provide meal statements, including payments and purchases on request. The official transcripts of seniors will not be released until the outstanding fees, fines and negative cafeteria balances are paid off.

Refunds

Families may request a refund of funds remaining in their child's cafeteria account. Please email refund requests to foodservicehelp@tahomasd.us. Families may donate the funds remaining in their account rather than receiving a refund when their child leaves the school. These funds are used to cover unpaid meal charges. Food services accept donations from community members to pay for regular meals for students with insufficient funds. Donations are used to pay off or pay down negative account balances based on the community member's request. Please contact the food services office with questions related to donations for children with insufficient funds.

Purchases and Account Balances

Parents may access their child's cafeteria account online through Skyward Family Access at

<https://www2.nwrdc.wa-k12.net/scripts/cgiip.exe/WService=wtahomas71/fwemnu01.w>

Parents may choose to select low balance notification in Skyward Family Access when the balance in their child's account is positive but low. Please contact your child's school registrar if you need assistance to create your user name and password required to access Skyward Family Access.

Payments

The District accepts check payments and cash payments in the cafeteria and at the food services office.

Parents/guardians may make online payments at <https://wa-tahoma.intouchreceipting.com/>