

PORTSMOUTH SCHOOLS MEAL CHARGING POLICY

The Portsmouth School Department recognizes the importance of good nutrition and wants to take all reasonable steps to make sure students have access to school meals.

These steps include providing access to applications for Free and Reduced Lunch for those families who qualify. Application forms will be sent home at the beginning of each school year, posted on the School Department website and available from the building Principal's office.

All students who do not qualify for Free and Reduced Lunch are expected to pay for school meals at the time of purchase. The School Department recognizes that there may be times when a student has forgotten their lunch money, or inadvertently failed to keep a positive balance in their account. Parents or guardians will be contacted by the school by note, e-mail, telephone call or letter when their student's account goes into the negative.

MEAL CHARGING

When a student's account becomes negative, or a student has forgotten their lunch money, meal charging may be permitted as follows:

Elementary School

The bookkeeper/cashier in each building will send a reminder notice home if a student is provided lunch without payment. Students will be permitted to charge up to three lunches. If payment is not received for the charged lunches prior to the next lunchtime, students will be provided an alternative brown bag lunch consisting of an offering of the required food groups of grain, vegetable, protein, fruit and milk in place of the hot lunch offering of the day. The cost of the alternative meal will be added to the outstanding account balance. Up to three alternative meals will be offered to the student without prior payment. If full payment is not made, or alternative arrangements made, students will not be permitted to charge additional lunches until the outstanding balance is paid. If a student has exceeded six days of unpaid meals, the student will be assisted in contacting a parent or guardian from school prior to lunchtime for a bag lunch from home or payment of the unpaid balance.

Middle School

Students will be permitted to charge one meal. If payment is not received for the charged meal prior to the next lunchtime, the student will be offered an alternative meal consisting of the required food groups in place of the main meal. The cost of the alternative meal will be added to the outstanding balance. Up to three alternative meals will be permitted to be charged. If full payment is not made or alternative arrangements made, students will not be permitted to charge additional lunches until the outstanding balance is paid. If a student has exceeds four days of unpaid meals, the student will be assisted in contacting a parent, guardian or other adult from school prior to lunchtime for a bag lunch from home or payment of the unpaid balance.

If the student's account has a negative balance the parent or guardian will be contacted by telephone, e-mail or letter regarding the outstanding balance.

Approved by Portsmouth School Board: August 12, 2014

High School

Students at the High School are not permitted to charge meals nor is charging permitted for a la carte items.

ACCOUNT BALANCES

The parent or guardian of all accounts with a negative account will receive an e-mail on Wednesdays informing them of the amount due on the account. Arrangements can be made at the individual schools to bring the account current. If a family is having financial difficulty in bringing the account balance they will be assisted in applying for Free and Reduced Lunch or in making acceptable payment arrangements. In addition, the Portsmouth School Department Business Office is open from 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday and from 7:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. on Fridays. Payments can be made by mail payable to Portsmouth Food Services, 1 Junkins Ave, 4th Floor, Portsmouth, NH 03801.

FREE AND REDUCED SCHOOL MEALS

Applications for Free and Reduced School Lunch can be submitted to the cafeteria **at any time** during the school year. School personnel are available to assist anyone in filling out the application for Free and Reduced School Lunch. Any balance owed prior to being determined eligible will remain the responsibility of the parent or guardian.

ONLINE PAYMENT OPTION

The Portsmouth School Department offers parents an online payment option. The website is myschoolbucks.com and the information can be found on the School Department website.