

CHILD NUTRITION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What can I expect to pay for school meals?

2013 - 2014 Prices

K-12 Breakfast \$1.00

K-12 Breakfast is FREE this year for students approved for Free or Reduced-price meal benefits

K-12 Lunch \$2.25

K-12 Lunch, reduced price \$.40

K-12 Milk, 8 oz carton \$.50

Adults may purchase foods at ala carte prices

Check the complete price list on our web site at www.pitt.k12.nc.us for more information. Click on Departments, select Child Nutrition and 2012-2013 cafeteria prices.

Why is my child required to take a fruit or a vegetable to get their school lunch for \$2.25?

The school lunch meal pattern has changed as a result of the Healthy - Hunger Free Act of 2010. The new meal pattern requires all students to take a minimum of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fruit or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vegetable to receive a reimbursable meal at the unit price of \$2.25.

What is the Healthy - Hunger Free Act of 2010?

On December 13, 2010, President Obama signed into law Public Law 111-296 the Healthy-Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010. This Legislation marks the most comprehensive changes to school nutrition in more than a generation. The new standards reflect the most current dietary science and are designed to combat childhood obesity & childhood hunger. Goals of the new legislation are to ensure students are offered both fruits and vegetables every day of the week; increase offerings of whole grain-rich foods; offer only fat-free or low-fat milk varieties; limit calories based on the age of the children being served to ensure proper portion size; and to increase the focus on reducing the amounts of saturated fat, trans fats and sodium. Implementation of the key changes will be phased in over a three year period, with final changes for sodium targets by the 2022-2023 school year.

Why is my child asked to take extra items if he/she doesn't plan to eat them?

Students must choose three or four items offered at breakfast and three, four or five items offered at lunch for USDA to consider it a complete meal. USDA requires a complete meal be taken in order for Child Nutrition to receive reimbursement. It is also important for children to take a full meal in order to benefit from a variety of nutrients.

Why do adults pay more for meals than students?

The reason the student meal is offered at a lower price is because each student meal is subsidized by the Federal Government. USDA provides a reimbursement for each student meal that meets a specific meal pattern. Schools do not receive USDA reimbursement for adult meals. Therefore, the cost set for adult meals must cover the complete cost of producing the meal. Adults may purchase their meals ala carte and pay the same ala carte prices as students.

May I pre-pay for my child's meals on-line?

Pitt County School District is pleased to offer parents the ability to manage their child's meal account over the Internet by using PayForIt.net. PayForIt.net may be accessed via Pitt County School's website or via www.payforit.net.

With PayForIt.net, parents can log in at any time to make a deposit to their child's account, view their child's account balance, set up recurring deposits to their child's account, set up e-mail notifications when their child's account falls below a certain dollar amount, or request a report showing what the child has purchased on their account in the **previous 30 days**. Payments processed before 9:00 p.m. ET should post to the student's account the next morning, in most cases.

If you have multiple children enrolled in the District, you can add money to each child's account during the same transaction. With this technology, users can be assured that all student information, credit card information and all other student data will be highly encrypted and secure.

If you wish to use a Mac computer to process a transaction, you must use the Firefox internet browser: PayForIt.net is not currently compatible with Safari. You may download Firefox for free by visiting www.mozilla.com.

May I pre-pay for my child's breakfast, lunch, and extras at the cafeteria?

Yes you may. In fact we encourage prepayment by the week, month or more. In order to be certain money sent for cafeteria purchases is credited to your child's account, please send your money in an envelope and provide the following information on the outside of the envelope:

- Student Name
- Student PIN (lunch number)
- Amount of Money enclosed
- Teacher's Name.

Please note that money is credited to each child's account in one sum and may be used for breakfast, lunch or snacks unless otherwise specified in writing by parent.

How does my child access their individual account in the cafeteria?

Students are assigned a Personal Identification Number (PIN) that is unique to their account. The student must tell the cashier their PIN for each transaction. Please help your student remember their number so they can tell their PIN to the cashier with confidence.

How can I find out the balance in my Child's Meal Account?

You will need to contact your Child's School Cafeteria to find out the balance. Families registered to use PayForIt have 24 hour access to account information.

Do I have to complete a free/reduced price meal application each year?

Yes. The federal guidelines require a new application each year for all students. (There are some exceptions for students who are directly certified through the cooperation of the NC Department of Health and Human Services and the SNAP and TANF programs.)

You may pick up an application at a school or from the Child Nutrition Central Office at 1717 West 5th Street, Greenville, NC or go online to Pitt.k12.nc.us to download a form.

Please complete only ONE application for your household. A complete set of instructions will be provided in the application packet.

Households may apply for meal benefits at any time during the school year.

Are students entitled to meal benefits at the beginning of the school year?

Yes. Students who paid full price or who were not a Pitt County School (PCS) student in the previous school year must continue to pay full price until a meal application is approved. Those PCS students who were receiving Free or Reduced-price meal benefits at the end of the previous school year may continue to receive benefits until a new application is processed or until the cut-off date at the beginning of the new school year. The household benefit will also extend to new students enrolled in PCS from households with children who received meal benefits at the end of the previous year. (We are not able to automatically match up new students, so you will need to let us know if you have a household member that is new to PCS.) If the student does not reapply or is found to be no longer eligible, the student must begin paying full price for meals. Any charges incurred, between the cut-off date and the approval date for meal benefits, are the responsibility of the household.

What happens if my child forgets to bring money for meals?

Our procedure is to charge complete meals only with a two day limit on charging, not to exceed \$.80 for students receiving reduced-price meal benefits and \$6.50 for students paying full price. The cashier will complete a charge slip and the slip will be sent home to the parents reminding them of the charge procedures and requesting payment for the charged meal(s).

If the student comes after the second day of charging and has no money or lunch, the teacher discretely makes the cashier aware and then a small alternate meal is provided to the student. An alternate meal consists of a fruit, a whole grain rich food and milk.

In the event a student gets to the cashier with a complete tray and is not eligible to charge, the cashier reminds him/her to bring money and keys that meal under a special reimbursable meal key set up for maxed out charges. Trays are not to be taken from the students. If the student continues to come without money or a lunch from home, a school administrator will be notified and further action could be taken.

If a charge is in dispute, the following procedure will be used: The parent will write a note stating their issue. When the note is received, the charges will be addressed, the account will be blocked and no charges can be put on that account. If the child should truly need to charge a meal after an account is blocked, the parent will be called to give permission for his/her child to get the meal.

CHARGES FOR ALA CARTE OR SNACK ITEMS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES AT ANY GRADE LEVEL.

How can I place restrictions on my student's account to prevent them from getting certain items from the cafeteria?

There is little Child Nutrition Services can do to restrict what a student chooses to pick up and place on their tray. Our cash register system does allow for messages or "flags" on student accounts and our staff will do their best to adhere to requests, but parents must understand that Child Nutrition programs follow strict food safety regulations. Health code requirements do not allow a student to return unwrapped items once they have picked them up. There is not sufficient staff to accompany each child through the line, and by the time they get to the cashier, the student may have already picked up "parent restricted" items.

If you wish to request restrictions for financial or other reasons not covered by a physician's diet order, the best way to address the issue is by parental involvement and communication with the student.

How can I arrange a special diet to accommodate a medical condition for my student?

All requests for special nutritional needs must be submitted on a Pitt County School Diet Order Form signed by a physician. Forms are available online, from your school nurse or at the Child Nutrition Central Office. To download a form from our website, go to Departments, select Child Nutrition, then click Diet Order Form. Have the child's doctor write the specific diet order that is to be followed. Be sure that all information is specific, accurate and complete. Diet Order Forms must be submitted with new dietary requests or whenever a change in diet is required. Once the completed form is received the request will be reviewed. Any necessary menu accommodations will be communicated to the cafeteria manager. The parents will be contacted if further information is needed.

Menu adjustments are made only for specific diagnosed medical conditions. We are unable to honor food preferences. We do, however, offer a variety of additional menu choices and a la carte items to accommodate individual likes and dislikes.

What happens if there is a balance in my Child's meal account at the end of the school year?

Any money left in the account at the end of the school year will be kept in that account, allowing the student to use those funds at the beginning of the next school year.

What happens to my student's meal account balance when they transfer between PCS schools?

Once the school data manager at the new school enrolls the transferred student, the student's meal account (including any account balance they may have) will automatically transfer to the student's new school cafeteria within 24hrs.

This applies to transfers during the school year, but also applies to transfers that happen over the summer due to students graduating from Elementary or Middle schools.

How do I get a refund if my student has graduated or transfers away from the district?

The best course of action is to spend the account down to a zero balance before leaving the district. If that is not possible, a Refund Request Form may be submitted to the cafeteria manager or to the Child Nutrition Office. The account balance will be verified and a check will be issued. If a request for refund is not submitted prior to June 30 of the current school year, the account balance will become the property of the PCS Child Nutrition program.

What happens when my check to the cafeteria bounces?

The receipt of Non-Sufficient Fund (NSF) checks is a time consuming and costly issue. As with any business, Pitt County Schools has an obligation to be fiscally accountable. To manage this process, our district uses a third party agency to collect NSF checks. The agency utilizes the federal and state laws allowing the electronic recovery process of NSF checks which results in a high rate of recovery at no cost to the school district. The cost becomes the responsibility of those who write non-sufficient fund checks with the electronic recovery of the face amount of the check and the electronic recovery of the state fee from the check writer's bank account. Please note that the third party agency charges a fee for returned check processing.

How can I get information about Child Nutrition Services?

Call 252-830-4226, or e-mail questions to Leann Seelman, Child Nutrition Director at seelmak.pitt.k12.nc.us.

The Child Nutrition office is located at 1717 W. 5th Street, Greenville, NC 27834

You may also check out the Child Nutrition Department on our Web site at www.pitt.k12.nc.us.