

## **Cristo Rey Kansas City Meal Charge Policy**

### **Qualify For Free or Reduced Price Meals**

Your child may qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Families that meet the Eligibility Criteria should complete an application (found in the Main Office). All students who qualify receive meals free of charge **or** at a reduced rate.

For those families that qualify for FREE meals, breakfast and lunch will be served at no cost. For families that qualify for REDUCED price meals, the charge for breakfast is .30 and the charge for lunch is .40.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for all meal charges incurred prior to qualifying for Free or Reduced Meal Status.

Students are served a hot lunch or salad bar at lunch. By adding a milk or side item it completes the balanced meal.

If your student qualifies for free or reduced price meals, discounted or free school services may also be available.

### **Paying for School Meals**

We offer a variety of convenient ways to pay for school meals. Checks, cash, or credit/debit cards are always accepted in the Main Office either as a pre-paid deposit to a student's account or for purchasing individual meals or ala carte items such as milk or juice. The Point of Sale system tracks your student's purchases.

### **Unpaid Meal Charge Policy**

Cristo Rey recognizes that adequate nutrition is essential to students' mental, physical, and academic growth. However, unpaid meal charges place a large financial burden on our school. Unless meals are provided at no charge, the school expects students and employees to pay for meals prior to or at the time of receipt. The ability to charge meals is a privilege, not a right, and is subject to the limitations established in this procedure. The school participates in the School Breakfast Program (SBP) and the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Students, whether at the free-, reduced-, or paid-rate, will receive a full reimbursable breakfast and/or lunch meal that meets USDA requirements regardless of whether they have, or do not have, adequate money in their student account or in-hand to cover the cost of the meal at the time of service. No reimbursable meal will be taken from any student in the event there are no funds or a negative balance in a student's meal account.

If a student has money in-hand to purchase a reduced-price or paid-meal at the time of the meal service, the student will be provided a meal and those funds will not be utilized to pay-down a negative balance. The cashier will key a reimbursable breakfast and/or lunch meal charging the student's account accordingly. All monies for breakfast and/or lunch must be taken to the Main Office for logging on the student's individual accounts.

Although a student may carry a negative balance, it is the student's parent/guardian that is responsible for payment in order to keep the student's balance from becoming negative. If a student has a negative balance at the time they become classified as eligible for either free or reduced price-meal status, having moved from full-pay to either reduced- or free-status or having moved from reduced- to free-status, the parent/guardian is still responsible for the negative balance accrued under the previous meal payment classification. To accommodate students who purchase school meals, payment options include paying ahead of time in the main office, paying off a negative balance in the Main Office, or setting up a payment plan with the Main Office. Parents/guardians of students with negative account balances will also receive a monthly statement of their account indicating past due charges.

The parent/guardian is still responsible for the negative balance accrued even if the student graduates at the end of their senior year or transfers out of the district. Upon request, positive balances may be refunded or moved to another student's account(s). If charges continue without repayment:

- Parent/guardian may be contacted by school staff to offer services or assistance as needed.
- Parent/guardian may be encouraged to resubmit a Free- And Reduced-Priced Meal Application which can be found [in the Main Office](#).

Employees may charge meals to their staff account or provide pre-payment to fund their accounts in the main office. Unpaid lunch balances will be deducted from employees' final paycheck of the year in June.

This policy outlines the school's approach to a meal charge policy in order to ensure a consistent and transparent approach to this issue. Communicating such a policy will prevent confusion for students and families and help promote effective financial management of the school meal programs. Key policy considerations include, but are not limited to:

- Provide children with adequate nutrition to focus in school;
- Maintain the financial integrity of the programs operated by the Nutrition Services Program within the school;
- Minimize stigmatization of children with meal charges;
- Address the serving of reimbursable alternative meals;
- Debt collection and debt collection efforts;
- How to communicate the policy, in writing, to families at the start of the school year;
- How to communicate the policy, in writing, to families transferring into the District throughout the year, and
- Additional communication strategies: "back-to-school" packets, website, and student handbooks.

This written policy will be provided, through mail or email, to all families at the start of the school year. When enforced to a particular student, this written policy will be provided again to the household through mail or email.

This written policy will be provided to all school staff responsible for policy enforcement including, but not limited to: School food service professionals responsible for collecting payment for meals at the point of service, staff involved in notifying families of low or negative balances, and staff involved in enforcing any other aspects of the meal charge policy, school social workers, school nurses, and other staff members that may assist students in need, principals, assistant principals, and any other administrators.

### ***DEFINITIONS:***

#### **What Is A National School Lunch Program, or NSLP, Meal?**

For lunch, all meals must provide five components: fruit, vegetables, meat/meat alternates, grains, and milk. For a lunch to be a program meal, the meal must contain ½-cup fruit or vegetables and at least two other servings from the five component groups. Three of the five components must be chosen with one of those components being either a fruit or vegetable for the meal to be reimbursable.

#### **What Is A School Breakfast Program, or SBP, Meal?**

There are three component groups that make up the breakfast meal pattern: grains (with optional meat/meat alternate allowed), fruit, fluid milk. For the breakfast meal to be a program meal the three components must be served.

## **What Is A Charged Meal?**

A charged meal occurs when a student enters the cashier line with a program meal and does not have the funds in his/her account or in-hand to sufficiently pay for the program meal. These meals are not taken from students.

### ***STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES:***

#### **Negative Balances-Student Accounts**

If a child has money to purchase a reduced-price or paid-meal at the time of the meal service, the child will be provided a meal. SFAs may not use the child's money to repay previously unpaid charges if the child intended to use the money to purchase that day's meal. Children who qualify for free meals will never be denied a meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance. Free And Reduced Meal Application is included in this policy and can be found in the Main Office.

No school program meal will be taken away from any student in the event there are no funds or a negative balance in a student's meal account. These meals are processed as program meals.

All students will receive a program meal during a negative balance period and be charged accordingly. If a student comes through a cashier line with a reimbursable meal, but does not have funds in their account, the student will be charged for the reimbursable meal and be reminded discreetly of the charge policy. All meals will be processed as program meals and will be charged to the student's meal account accordingly.

Parents of students with negative account balance will receive a monthly account statement to remind them to make a payment to cover their student's negative balance.

#### **Accounts Receivable Responsibilities:**

The Accounts Receivable employee will run the Account Balance report for accounts with negative balances in excess of \$5.00 and will take the following actions, logging all steps on a Student Account Log (form attached):

1. Send a copy of the student's lunch history report, a past due account balance statement, and Negative Balance letter home to the parent via the school secretary or teacher once a month.. This information is to be sent in a school envelope. Documentation of information and process is to be made and kept on-site.
2. By the fourth week, if the account is still negative, and no payment has been made, the Accounts Receivable employee may contact the Special Assistant to the President in regards to:
  - a. The Accounts Receivable employee will give the Special Assistant to the President the student's Customer History report, and
  - b. The date first contact was sent to the student's family.
  - c. The Accounts Receivable employee will ask the Special Assistant to the President to follow up with the family to see if they have any questions and find out if help is needed in filling out the Free/Reduced Price Meal application.
  - d. The Accounts Receivable employee will fill out the Student Account log noting the date of contact with the Special Assistant to the President
  - e. The Accounts Receivable employee will ask that the Special Assistant to the President
  - f. note the date contact was made with the student's family.
  - g. Accounts Receivable employee will obtain all documentation.
3. If a negative balance persists after the 4<sup>th</sup> week, and / or there has been no reported payments, the Accounts Receivable employee will scan the Student Account log and send to their Supervisor and to the Special Assistant to the President with information about the delinquency of the account.

## **Donations**

Individuals wanting to donate may make donations to individual schools to pay off all or some unpaid meal charges. Parents/Guardians of students who are graduating or transferring out of the district can donate the positive balance in their student's meal account to pay off other students' unpaid meal charges. Requests should be submitted to the Main Office with the student's name.

## **Unclaimed Funds**

All refunds must be requested within 90 calendar days of the last day of the current school year. After 90 calendar days from the last day of the current school year, unclaimed funds of students no longer enrolled become the property of Cristo Rey Kansas City High School and will be used for other student's unpaid meal charges.

By law, Food and Nutrition Services funds cannot be used to cover bad debts such as unpaid meal charges. Therefore, unpaid meal charges remaining at the end of the school year will be paid by the school where the student accrued the debt.

School employees are mandated by the State of Missouri to report any instances of suspected abuse or neglect to the Children's Division (CD) of the Department of Social Services. School personnel will report to the CD any instance where a student's arrival at school with no provision for food leads to a reasonable cause to suspect neglect.

## **Nutrition Services**

Cristo Rey Kansas City High School is dedicated to providing students with quality meals, nutrition knowledge, skills and values they need for healthy growth and academic success. Each day we serve nearly 400 nutritious meals that meet the recommended dietary allowances for school-age children. Our menu plan includes a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins. Please view the school lunch menus monthly on our website. to learn more about the nutritious breakfast and lunch choices offered daily.

## **Nondiscrimination**

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, age, or disability in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to Department programs and to the location of services, activities, and facilities that are accessible by persons with disabilities may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Office of the General Counsel, Coordinator – Civil Rights Compliance (Title VI/Title IX/504/ADA/Age Act), 6<sup>th</sup> Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-526-4757 or TTY 800-735-2966; fax number 573-522-4883; email [civilrights@dese.mo.gov](mailto:civilrights@dese.mo.gov).

USDA Non-discrimination Statement:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at:

[http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (566) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter 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;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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