



Columbus Catholic Schools

Food Service Program Payment and Collection Policy

The Columbus Catholic Schools (CCS) Food Service Program operates as an independent program and is a pre-pay program. This means funds must be deposited into a lunch account before lunch is provided. Families are expected to maintain a credit balance in their lunch account at all times. Payments schedules are sent to families at the beginning of the school year and are listed at the bottom of the lunch menu in order for families to determine their financial obligations.

Families can view their lunch account activity anytime via RenWeb Parent Access. RenWeb Parent Access is accessible through www.columbuscatholicschools.com. If assistance is needed for logging into RenWeb Parent Access, please contact the school. It is recommended that families maintain a minimum credit balance of \$15.00 per student in the family.

Free or Reduced Hot Lunch Program

CCS provides hot lunch meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). NSLP is a federally assisted meal program that provides nutritionally balanced low cost or free lunches for qualified students. School districts that participate in NSLP get cash subsidies and donated commodities from the USDA for each meal they serve. Under NSLP guidelines, CCS follows “offer vs. serve” menu planning. Students must choose three or more of the five meal components offered for the student’s lunch to be deemed a complete meal.

Families are encouraged to contact the school or the Food Service Director to obtain an application for free and reduced meals through the NSLP. If a family’s total household income is the same or less than the amount of the Federal Income Chart provided with the application, the family will qualify for free or reduced-price meals. CCS is required to complete the electronic Direct Certification process. This process identifies any family receiving state aid which automatically qualifies them to receive free lunch benefits without the family having to complete the application process.

To apply for free and reduced-price meals, households must complete the application and return it to school. The information provided on the application is completely confidential and will be used for the purpose of determining free or reduced lunch eligibility. Applications are collected at the start of each school year but can be submitted at any time during the school year as the family’s financial situation changes.

It is important that every family that qualifies for free or reduced lunch obtains an application for their student each year. Not only will students receive a nutritious meal at a free or reduced cost, but many grants and title funds our school applies for are based on the number of students that qualify for a free or reduced meal.

Lunch Fee Collection

The finance office is responsible for the accurate and timely collection of funds due from food service related transactions.

If a family’s financial situation makes paying their lunch account balance difficult, the family should contact the finance office to discuss their options.

When a family’s lunch account balance has a balance, the following steps will take place:

1. Weekly Balance Alert

- a. When the lunch account balance reaches \$0.01 due or more, the family will receive a weekly automatically generated email that the balance in their account is more than \$0.01.
- b. It is the responsibility of the family to ensure that their account has a credit balance.

2. Second Notice

- a. When a lunch account balance reaches \$20.00 due, the family shall receive a written notification of their account balance with a copy of this policy.
- b. It is the responsibility of the family to make payment to the finance office for the amount due, plus an additional amount to maintain a credit balance.

3. \$50.00 Amount Due

- a. When the lunch account balance reaches \$50.00 due, the family will receive written notification of their account balance with a copy of this policy.
- b. Students will not be permitted to purchase lunch until a credit balance is established or acceptable arrangements for payment have been made.
 - i. Students will be required to bring a lunch from home.
 - ii. If a student does not bring a lunch from home parents will be contacted to bring lunch for their student(s)
 - iii. If no payments are made and no lunch is provided from home, students will receive a school lunch which will be charged to the family account. If this continues for five days the school will contact Social Services to report neglect.

4. Free Lunch Accounts with Balance Due

- a. Students who are entitled to free meals will not be denied a meal as this would violate the USDA rules.
- b. Students who are entitled to free meals will not be permitted to take any extra food or drink beyond a basic lunch.

5. Families and Senior (12th Grade) Students

- a. Senior students will not be permitted to participate in the graduation ceremony or receive grade transcripts until the lunch account balance is paid in full or acceptable arrangements for payment have been made.

6. End of School Year Balances

- a. All account billing and fees must be paid by the last day of school or the family must have an alternate plan for payment approved by the Finance Controller.
- b. Families with account balances and unpaid fees that do not have an alternate plan for payment approved by the Finance Controller shall receive written notification that their account is past due with a copy of this policy.

CCS encourages families to maintain open communication with the Finance office to ensure understanding of each family's financial circumstances. Experts have established links between good nutrition and improved concentrations, motivation, and achievement by students. Help us continue to provide the options of a healthy, well-balanced meal through our Food Service Program by maintaining a credit balance in your family's lunch account.