



# Torrance Unified School District

## Nutrition Services Department

### Meal Charge Policy

With the exception of students who are eligible to receive meals at no cost, students may pay on a per-meal basis or submit payments in advance. The Superintendent or designee shall maintain an account indicating payments received from each student for the purchase of school meals. The Direct Certification process will occur monthly throughout the school year in an effort to qualify students for free or reduced-price meals, and meal applications are available year-round. Households are encouraged to apply in person in the Nutrition Services office or online at <https://family.titank12.com>.

At the beginning of the school year, parents/guardians shall be notified of the District's meal payment policies and encouraged to prepay for meals whenever possible. Households will receive an information packet from the school site that includes the meal charge information at the beginning of the school year. Throughout the year, families will receive email, text, letter and phone call messages regarding student account balances. New families will be given an information packet about the Nutrition Services Department and the charge policy upon enrollment at the Family Welcome Enrollment Center.

Elementary school students who receive meals at the full "paid" price will be provided a complete meal and the student account will be charged accordingly. Parents/guardians are responsible for paying those meal charges, and for keeping the student's account current by monitoring and depositing funds in the student's cafeteria account.

Middle school students who receive meals at the full "paid" price may charge up to \$5.00 worth of meals on their account. Students may purchase a meal or other food items with a cash payment at the point of sale daily regardless of the account balance. A la carte items cannot be charged. Parents/guardians are responsible for keeping the student's account current by monitoring and depositing funds in the student's cafeteria account. **Food will not be provided to middle school students who have exceeded the \$5.00 credit limit and/or do not have funds to pay.**

High school students who receive meals at the full "paid" price may not charge once they reach a \$0 balance. Students may purchase a meal or other food items with a cash payment at the point of sale daily regardless of the account balance. A la carte items cannot be charged. Parents/guardians are responsible for keeping the student's account current by monitoring and depositing funds in the student's cafeteria account. **Food will not be provided to high school students who do not have funds to pay either in hand or in their account.**

Students eligible for reduced-price meals will be allowed to charge meals to their account per EC49557(C). Students eligible for reduced-price meals are always provided a complete meal regardless of whether they have money or not, and the student's account will be charged the appropriate reduced-price amount. Parents/guardians are responsible for keeping the student's account current by monitoring and depositing funds in the student's cafeteria account.

In case of repeated nonpayment by a student, the Superintendent or designee may contact parents/guardians to discuss the reasons for the nonpayment. If necessary, payment plans may be arranged. The Superintendent or designee may evaluate individual circumstances to determine if the student's parents/guardians need assistance completing an application for free or reduced-price meals or need referral to social services.

In order to avoid potential misuse of a student's food service account by someone other than the students in whose name the account has been established, the Superintendent or designee shall verify a student's identity when setting up the account and when charging any meal to the account. The Superintendent or designee shall investigate any claim that a bill does not belong to a student or is inaccurate, shall not require a student to pay a bill that appears to be the result of identity theft.

Payments on an account can be made at the school site or the Nutrition Services Office for no additional fee. Payments can also be made online through Titan School Solutions for a small transaction fee at <https://family.titank12.com>. Students will be able to maintain a meal credit on their account while attending Torrance Unified School District. Each student has an account linked to their student ID number. Once a student leaves TUSD, any unclaimed excess funds in the account after three years will be applied to outstanding year-end bad debt. Families with excess account funds will be notified no less than annually to claim the refund.

Parents/guardians will be notified of a student's negative balance by way of an automated school messaging system no less than three times per week. Negative balance notifications are sent via email, text, U.S. Mail, and phone calls. Low balance notifications are sent no less than twice per week to the primary household contact listed in the Student Information System.

This policy will be communicated to all district staff responsible for policy enforcement at the beginning of each school year. This includes, at minimum, Nutrition Services staff, school social workers, school nurses, district homeless liaison, administrators, principals and school office staff.

BP 3551 states that "the Superintendent or designee shall establish strategies and procedures for the collection of meal payments, including delinquent meal payments, and shall clearly communicate these procedures and related District policies to students and parents/guardians. The procedures adopted by the Superintendent or designee shall conform with 2 CFR 200.426 and any applicable CDE guidance, and shall not overly identify students with unrecovered or delinquent debt or treat them differently than other students."