

Meal Charge Policy SY2020–21

Creative Minds International Public Charter School's goal is to provide students with daily access to nutritious no- or low-cost meals. Unpaid charges, however, place a large financial burden on our school. This policy ensures compliance with federal requirements for the NSLP + HSA Child Nutrition Programs, and provides oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances.

This policy also establishes procedures to address unpaid meal charges. The provisions of this policy pertain to regular priced school breakfast and lunch meals only. Creative Minds provides this policy as a courtesy to those students in the event that they forget or lose their lunch money. Charging for items outside of the reimbursable meals (a la carte items, adult meals, etc.) is expressly prohibited.

- Free Meal Benefit - Eligible students are allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch each day. Note that all students in the District of Columbia receive free breakfast.
- Full Pay Students – Parents or guardians will pay for meals at the school's published paid meal rate each month in advance of the beginning of each month. If financial hardship exists, parents and guardians are encouraged to apply for free or reduced price lunches for their child.
- Parents or guardians are responsible for meal payment Creative Minds through our website payment portal. Notices of low or deficit balances will be discretely sent to parents or guardians at regular intervals during the school year from the school by either Carlos Garcia (Operations and Finance Manager) or Heather Hesslink (Director of Operations & Compliance).
- Parents or guardians may prepay for meals in advance via our online website payment portal or with a check payable to "Creative Minds International PCS". Further details are available on our webpage at www.creativemindspcs.org or from the administrative office. Any remaining funds for a student who remains at Creative Minds will be carried over to the next school or refunded by prior arrangement.
- Refunds for withdrawn or graduating students - Parents or guardians must submit a refund request for any money remaining in an account in writing or via email. For graduating students, parents or guardians will be given the option to transfer remaining funds to a sibling's account with a written request.
- Unclaimed funds must be requested within one school year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the Creative Minds.

Balances owed. If a family owes a balance for previous months, Creative Minds will contact parents or guardians via email by the end of the following month. If there is no response, a reminder will be sent by email and a phone call will be made to the parent or guardian. If after this second attempt there is still no response, the school will send a letter to the parent or guardian's home address. During this period meals will continue to be served to the student. Creative Minds will work with the parent or guardian to arrange installment payments if needed in order to bring the account balance to zero. Failure to pay all or part of the amount due may result in:

- End of year progress report cards being withheld
- Loss of student privileges to participate in other activities offered by the school
- Referral to a collections agency after 90 days if no agreement is reached on a payment plan.



A SAFE START
TO A STRONG YEAR

If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, Creative Minds will investigate the situation more closely and take further action as needed. If financial hardship exists, parents and families are encouraged to apply for free or reduced price lunches for their child if applicable.