



TRI-COUNTY SCHOOL CORPORATION

Board approved May 8, 2023

SCHOOL MEAL POLICY

The Tri-County School Corporation participates in the National School Lunch Program and accepts responsibility for providing free and reduced-price meals to eligible children in the schools under its jurisdiction.

Purchases in the cafeteria may be prepaid into individual food service accounts before meal service or by cash or check at the school. Parents/guardians can make individual food service payments online through the current debit or credit card payment service. Payments should indicate the account(s) to which the funds should be credited with the student's name(s) and amount. The only deductions from prepaid accounts will be for meals or other allowable food purchases in the cafeteria.

The Child Nutrition Program also provides free or reduced-price meals to all qualifying students as determined by the state and the appropriate corporation officials per family income standards, regulations, and procedures the United States Department of Agriculture has prescribed.

Applications for free and reduced meal benefits are provided for parents/guardians at registration, available on the school website at www.trico.k12.in.us, and at the corporation and school offices. Parents/guardians may apply anytime during the school year. Parents/guardians may re-submit an application if there are changes in the household. An example would be a change in income due to job loss or additional household members, such as the birth of a baby.

If students qualify for free or reduced-price school meals and USDA-approved breakfast and lunch, their meals are reimbursed in whole or part with federal funds. For students who do not qualify, parents/guardians are expected to pay for their student's meals or provide them with lunch from home.

Lunch Charges

1. Free and Reduced Lunch Students

Free lunch status allows a child to receive a free meal daily. The purchase of extra milk, a-la-cart items or additional main course items are an additional cost requiring proper funds.

Students are allowed to bring lunch from home; however, the purchase of milk and a-la-carte items are not included in the USDA complete meal plan. The purchase of milk-only or a-la-carte items requires a positive lunch fund balance.

Reduced lunch status allows a child to receive reduced-priced meals at a reduced amount determined by the federal program. Students will be allowed to have a negative account balance; however, negative lunch balances will be addressed following the Balance Owed steps listed below.

2. *Paid Lunch Students*

All Tri-County students will be allowed to charge up to a maximum of the dollar equivalent of three (3) combined breakfast and lunch meals which will be known as the “charge cap”.

Parents/guardians will be alerted of low and deficit balances. Account balances are accessible by logging in to the child’s K12 payment center account.

When the child reaches the “charge cap,” they may still receive a meal charged to their account. These meals will include anything on the main menu. No purchases of extra milk or a-la-cart items, including additional main courses, once the charge cap is reached.

Balances Owed

The school corporation will work with all parents/guardians to ensure every student has an equal opportunity for daily breakfast and lunch. Parents/guardians always have the option of sending lunch from home.

The kitchen manager or the building principal may work out payment plans. However, if there is no attempt made by the responsible parent/guardian to deposit funds to cover the charged meals or provide lunch for a child, the following steps will be taken:

Step 1: The Food Service Director will email/contact a letter to the household reminding them of the delinquency. If there is no corrective action, move to step 2.

Step 2: The building-level office staff will call the parent/guardian. An application for Free & Reduced will be sent to the parent/guardian. If there is no corrective action, move to step 3.

Step 3: If the balance continues to go into the negative and the household is not responding, the building principal will be notified. If the negative balance is not brought to zero, the Corporation may take action to collect the unpaid debt by means of a collection agency.

Refunds

1. *Withdrawn Students*

A written request for a refund of any money remaining in their account must be submitted for any withdrawn student. The request should include the address to which the refund will be mailed. An email request is acceptable. If there are any outstanding obligations, such as book rent or corporation fees, the account fund will be applied to these obligations before granting a refund.

2. *Graduating Students*

Students who are graduating at the end of the year will be given a refund. Lunch funds can also be transferred to a sibling’s account with a written request. If there are any outstanding obligations, such as book rent or corporation fees, the account fund will be applied to these obligations before granting a refund.

3. *Unclaimed Funds*

All refunds must be requested within one year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the Tri-County School Corporation and be distributed to the “Kids Fund” at the school where the student attended.