

AJUSD Meal Charge Policy

The school meal programs aim to provide nutritious meals to children during the school day. Children may receive breakfast and lunch at no charge if they are categorically eligible for free/reduced meals or if they qualify for free meals based on Federal poverty guidelines. Children who do not qualify for free/reduced meals may purchase meals at the paid rate. Sometimes, however, children who do not qualify for free meals would like a breakfast or lunch, but do not have money in their account or in hand to cover the cost of the meal at the time of the meal service.

As of July 1, 2017, all school food authorities operating the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program initiated a written unpaid meal charge policy. The policy must be communicated to all families with children within the school food authority and all school or district-level staff members responsible for policy enforcement. Apache Junction Unified School District will communicate through school newsletters, district food service department websites. This policy must be sent home with registration information each school year. Our meal charge policy is as follows:

To ensure students receive the nutrition they need throughout the school day the Apache Junction Unified School District shall maintain a meal charge program that minimizes the identification of children with insufficient funds in their lunch account. Students in grades K-8 are allowed to charge up to three meals. A student in grades K-8 who has reached the limit of three meals will be served an alternative meal until their account is current. Students in grades 9-12 may not charge meals. No lunch charges will be allowed under any circumstances the last ten days of the school year.

Cafeteria Leads will send a low balance note home when a student's account reaches \$6.00. This will be done through an email or a note in a plain white envelope delivered to the teacher and sent home with the student at the end of the day. This communication must be kept confidential as the student must never be notified of their low balance or debt in front of other children. Hand stamps may never be used.

Students with insufficient funds in their account may charge three meals. These meals must be repaid by the student. After three charges have been used, an alternate meal will be served until the account has been paid. Since three meals are considered to be lunch, an alternate meal will be given at breakfast.

Alternate Meals include:

Breakfast- Granola Bar, String Cheese, Fruit and Milk

Lunch- PBJ or Cheese Sandwich, Salad/Fruit Bar and Milk

This Meal Charge Policy is for Students only. Adult meals may never be charged.