

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS)
Department of Food and Nutrition Services (DFNS)
Meal Payment Procedures

DFNS ensures all students have access to meals during the school day, **regardless of eligibility for meals or account balance**. The Montgomery County Board of Education [Policy JPH, School Food and Nutrition Services Programs](#), was adopted by Resolution No. 224-22 on May 10, 2022.

Parents/guardians are responsible for school cafeteria account balances incurred by their student(s) and MCPS must collect unpaid school cafeteria charges.

- Payment can be made via cash, check, or money order to the cafeteria manager at any time, or in cash at the time of purchase. There is no transaction fee associated with these payments.
- Payment can be made through [MySchoolBucks](#). There is a transaction fee to use MySchoolBucks.
- Incremental payments can be made towards the balance at any time.
- Within each current school year, no repayment shall be sought for students who accumulate meal charges before qualifying for Free And Reduced-price Meals (FARMS). These negative balances are financially supported by [MCPS's Education Foundation Dine with Dignity Campaign](#).

Negative Account Balances

- **Carry Forward:** Negative meal account balances of -\$10.00 or less carry forward into the next school year.
- **Invoices:** Negative meal account balances greater than -\$10.00 will be invoiced to parents/guardians and must be paid through [MySchoolBucks](#). DFNS will absorb the transaction fee associated with paying a prior year invoice.

Positive Account Balances

- **Carry Forward:** Positive meal account balances carry forward into the next school year.
- Students leaving MCPS may transfer positive account balances to another child, request a refund, or donate to support MCPS school nutrition programs. Refund, transfer, and donation requests can be emailed to DFNSHelpDesk@mcpsmd.org.
- If a refund or transfer is not requested within three years from the end of the school year following graduation or withdrawing from MCPS, the remaining balance will be considered unclaimed property and may be donated to MCPS school nutrition programs.

Meal Payment Communication

Schools and DFNS will communicate in the following ways to collect payments from families and to reduce the overall debt as much as possible.

DFNS	Individual Schools
DFNS will send ParentSquare notifications (including text, voicemail, and email): Weekly for students with negative balances exceeding -\$5.00. Daily for students with negative balances exceeding -\$25.00 Monthly for prior year invoices	OPTIONAL: Cafeteria managers may print current year cafeteria account statements with low and negative balances and provide to designated school staff members to be sent home with students.
DFNS will send monthly negative meal balance reports to administrators for school-based follow up.	Once negative balances exceed -\$25.00, school administrators, pupil personnel workers, parent community coordinators, or school counselors will coordinate to contact and encourage families for FARMS and determine a path for payment.