



SCHOOL NUTRITION FAQ

1. What services does the School Nutrition Program offer?

The School Nutrition Program includes the School Breakfast and National School Lunch programs. The School Nutrition Department partners with Decatur Farm to School and participates in the Georgia Department of Education's Harvest of the Month.

2. What is the National School Lunch Program?

The National School Lunch Program is a federally-assisted meal program in over 101,000 public and non-profit private schools and residential childcare institutions. School districts that participate in the lunch program get cash subsidies and donated commodities from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for each meal they serve. In return, they must serve lunches that meet Federal requirements and offer free or reduced-price lunches to eligible children.

3. What are "entitlement foods" and "commodities," and how do they play a part?

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foods (formerly referred to as commodities) are U.S. foods purchased by the USDA and provided to schools at minimal cost. These foods typically include fruits, vegetables, meats, cheeses, dry and canned beans, fruit juices, vegetable oils, peanut products, rice, pasta, flour, and other grain products. In addition to these "entitlement" foods, schools also may receive "bonus" foods if there is an agricultural surplus and/or depressed market prices.

4. Which nutritional guidelines does CSD follow?

School lunches must meet the applicable recommendations of the USDA's Final Rule on school meal nutrition standards: Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch & School Breakfast Programs, passed on January 25, 2012, which recommends that, based on analysis of a week's meals, no more than 30 percent of an individual's calories come from fat, and less than 10 percent from saturated fat. Regulations also establish a standard for school lunches to provide one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowances of protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium, and calories. School lunches must meet Federal nutrition requirements, but local school food authorities decide what specific foods to serve and how they are prepared.

5. Can students with special dietary needs receive school meals?

In accordance with USDA regulations, School Food Authorities (SFAs) must ensure children with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). SFAs are to make reasonable modifications to accommodate children with disabilities. This includes providing special meals at no extra charge to children with a disability, which restricts their diet. SFAs are required to make substitutions to meals for children with a disability that restricts the child's diet and only when supported by a written medical statement from a State-licensed healthcare professional. In Georgia, this includes a medical professional licensed to prescribe medication, such as a Physician (Medical or Osteopathic Physician), Nurse Practitioner, or Physician Assistant.

6. How much do meals cost?


Meal prices cover operation and food preparation expenses.

	Per Day		Per Week		Per Month	
	Full Pay	Reduced	Full Pay	Reduced	Full Pay	Reduced
Elementary Breakfast	\$1.75	\$0.30	\$7.00	\$1.50	\$28.00	\$6.00
Middle & High Breakfast	\$2.15	\$0.30	\$10.75	\$1.50	\$43.00	\$6.00
Elementary Lunch	\$3.25	\$0.40	\$16.25	\$2.00	\$65.00	\$8.00
Middle & High Lunch	\$3.50	\$0.40	\$17.50	\$2.00	\$70.00	\$8.00
Extra Milk	\$0.50		\$2.50		\$10.00	


7. How do I pay for meals? Can I set up recurring charges?

Payment is done through the Infinite Campus Portal, which supports recurring payments.

To add a payment method:

1. Log into the Parent Portal.
2. Select  **My Accounts**
3. Select **Payment Methods**
4. At the bottom of the page, select **New**. This page will allow you to add bank or credit card information to your account.
5. Select **Save**

To set up a recurring meal payment:

1. Log into the Parent Portal
2. If you have multiple CSD students: ensure the student for whose food service account you want to set up recurring payments is active. To do so, click their photo or name at the top-right of the Portal
3. Select  **My Accounts**
4. Select **Recurring Payments**
5. Select **Food Service**
6. Personalize your choices, such as
 - a. Frequency of transaction or a low-balance threshold
 - b. Amount to pay each time
 - c. Payment method
7. Click **Save**



Go to <https://www.csdecaturnet/portal> for additional Portal information.

How can families apply for free or reduced-price meals?

Families can apply for free or reduced-price meals anytime during the school year using the Infinite Campus Parent Portal.

1. Log into the Parent Portal
2. Select **More**
3. Select **Meal Benefits**
4. Select **Meal Benefits Application**
5. Fill in the required information
6. Select **Submit**

Paper copies of the application are available at school sites. For expediency and accuracy in processing, families are strongly encouraged to apply online.

8. What is the \$4.00 or \$0.35 fee charged when adding money to my child's lunch account?

Infinite Campus's payment processor charges the district 35 cents for each bank transaction, hence the 35-cent fee for savings or checking account transactions. Likewise, the payment processor charges a percentage of all credit card transactions based on the credit card that is used. In an attempt to break even, the district set a credit card transaction fee at a flat rate of \$4.00. Funds received from the \$4.00 and \$0.35 transaction fees are used to pay the fees that Infinite Campus's payment processor charges.

9. Does the General Fund Budget financially support School Nutrition?

The School Nutrition Program is committed to providing every child with access to a healthy breakfast and lunch during their school day. The School Nutrition Program operates as an independent, self-sufficient program sustained through meal payments and government reimbursements. School Nutrition is charged with providing safe, healthy meals that uphold all federal regulatory requirements and are appealing and delicious to City Schools of Decatur students.

10. Why is the district changing procedures for accumulating meal charges?

The change in the meal charge procedure is being implemented to discourage the regular practice of charging meals, bring negative nutrition accounts to current levels, ensure compliance with federal regulations, and prevent negative debts in the school nutrition program.

11. What are the charging guidelines for the grade bands?

Students will have a maximum limit of three charged meals, equivalent to -\$10.50 per student for high and middle school and -\$9.75 for elementary school.

12. When will the new meal charge procedure be in effect?

The new procedure will be effective on February 1, 2024.



13. What happens when a student reaches the maximum limit of charged meals?

Once the maximum limit is reached, students will be provided an alternative lunch consisting of a cheese sandwich and milk. Please see question 5 regarding special diets.

14. What is the responsibility of parents and guardians regarding meal charges?

Parents and guardians are accountable for covering the costs of any debt on their students' accounts. Charging a meal should only be done in emergency situations and resolved as soon as possible to avoid accumulating meal debts.

15. Are adults allowed to charge meals in the school's nutrition program?

No, adults are not permitted to charge meals and must pay the full cost before receiving meals.

16. How will the School Nutrition Department communicate with parents regarding negative balances?

The school nutrition department will communicate with parents through weekly emails to address negative balances, ensuring timely resolution of financial obligations.

17. What are the consequences if a student's account has outstanding balances when they withdraw or transfer from CSD?

Student accounts must be settled before withdrawal or transfer to another district school, and transcripts will be held until full payment is received for outstanding balances.

18. Can parents turn on push notifications to get a reminder that their child's lunch balance has dropped below a certain threshold?

The School Nutrition Department is working with the Information Services Department to turn on this feature for parents. Once active, parents will be able to set the threshold for the notifications.

19. What is the unpaid lunch balance percentage for students who do not receive free and reduced lunch and those who do receive free and reduced lunch?

The total unpaid lunch debt is approximately \$88,000. The percentage of the balance for students who do not receive free and reduced lunch is 46%, or about \$41,000. The percentage of the balance for students who receive free and reduced lunch is 36%, or about \$31,000. According to Federal guidelines, students are responsible for charges incurred before free or reduced benefits are awarded, and the federal government will not pay the retroactive negative debt. Staff and students who have left CSD make up the remaining 18% of outstanding balances.

20. If parents have questions or need further clarification, who should they contact?

Parents can contact the School Nutrition Department at meals@csdecatur.net (470) 237-0368 ext 7607 for questions or further clarification.

