

Berlin Area School District

Food Service Payment Policies

The Food Service Department at Berlin Area Schools strives to provide nutritious meals at a reasonable cost to parents. We are regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) who considers providing for a child's basic needs (such as food) to be a parental responsibility. Schools are not required to provide meals for paid or reduced priced students who do not have adequate funds in their account to purchase a meal.

Any family may apply for free or reduced priced breakfast and lunch provided by subsidies from the federal government. Applications are distributed with all registration packets at the beginning of each school year and to incoming students during the school year. Applications are also available at each school office, the district business office and the school website. Parents are required to pay for meals until a completed application is received and approved.

The USDA regulation (section 1.321) states that a student bringing full payment for a meal on any given day must receive that meal, regardless of account balance. In other words, if a family owes money to the school district for meals, but sends the full amount of payment needed to purchase breakfast or lunch for that day, those funds cannot be applied to their negative account, and the child must receive the meal they have currently paid for.

Reduced priced and full pay meals must be prepaid. Payment options include cash, check and online payment (for a small fee at the school website). Berlin schools use an automated system to manage student accounts. Parents can check their child's account transactions online at the school website. The district also sends automated low balance calls/emails when a child's balance is under \$5.00. If a child's account balance drops below \$0 (negative balance) and the negative balance is not paid within the three days, the student will be offered an alternate meal of a peanut butter sandwich and milk, for lunch only, at a charge of \$1.00. For students in grades K-5 this alternate menu will continue for up to five days and for students in grades 6-12 it will continue for up to two days.

Participants in the school food service program are reminded that all negative balances must be paid within one week of the end of the school year. Balances in food service accounts will be automatically carried over to the next school year for continued participation in the food service program. In the case of leaving the district a refund for any remaining balance will be issued by the Business Office within thirty days of transferring out. Balances of graduating seniors will automatically be transferred to siblings, if applicable. Remaining graduating senior balances will be issued by check and mailed to the graduating student's home by the end of June.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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