

**1/1/2018**

### **Twin Rivers Nutrition Services Meal Payment Policy**

This policy ensures compliance with federal reporting requirements for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Child Nutrition Programs (CNP), and provides accountability for the collection of funds for unpaid meals. All meal prices are set in accordance to federal and state regulations.

The goals of this policy are:

- To establish consistent procedures for school meal payments districtwide.
- To create a positive experience for students during meal service.
- To ensure all students are treated equally, with dignity, kindness, and respect.
- To encourage parents/guardians to pre-pay for student meals.
- To promote parent/guardian responsibility for meal payments and self-responsibility of the student.

### **Fiscal Responsibility**

The Twin Rivers Nutrition Services Department recognizes that healthy, nutritious meals are an important component to our student's ability to learn. However, unpaid meals place a large financial burden on our department and the district's operating budget. There is a responsibility on the part of the students and parents/guardians to satisfy all financial obligations to our meal programs.

For the health and welfare of the student, it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to either provide adequate funds, send a home-prepared meal to school, or provide a qualifying meal application. When a student comes to school without a meal or does not have funds to participate in school meal programs, school administrators may consider if circumstances warrant contacting social workers or Child Protective Services. Frequent occurrences may indicate the family's need for discounted meals.

If there is financial difficulty in the household, the student may be eligible to receive meals at a reduced price, or free. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to submit a meal application every year, at any time during the year. In addition to the school office or cafeteria, parents/guardians may contact the Twin Rivers Nutrition Services Department at 916-566-1600 extension 50527 to obtain a meal application. The meal application is also available in multiple languages at <http://www.twinriversusd.org/depts/nutrition>.

### **Paying for School Meals**

In order to provide students and parents/guardians in our district with the best possible service and accountability concerning school meals, the following procedures have been implemented:

- Twin Rivers has a "no charging" policy. We encourage parents/guardians to pre-pay for their student's meals.
- Payment for meals can be made in advance in the school cafeteria, online, or at the time of service. Parents/guardian's using a credit or debit card may establish an online meal account through [www.MySchoolBucks.com](http://www.MySchoolBucks.com) using their student's ID number. ID numbers may be obtained from our cafeteria staff or by calling the Nutrition Services office at 916-566-1600 extension 50527. Payments made online are preferred for enhanced accountability.
- A \$20.00 fee will be added to the student's account for each check returned for non-sufficient funds.
- Our school cafeterias have computerized points of sale that maintain records of all money deposited and meals served. Information and account balances are available by calling the school cafeteria and speaking to the cafeteria staff.

It is not the intent of the school or cafeteria staff to punish or embarrass any student. We ask for the assistance of our parents/guardians to help us deliver a positive eating experience for their student by providing the required financial resources. A student who does not have money to purchase a meal will be given a wholesome, nutritious and well-balanced meal. Students are never given an alternative meal or denied a meal based on their ability to pay. The cafeteria staff will alert the parent/guardian no later than 10 days after the student received a meal that they could not pay for. After five meals given to the student with no payment, the cafeteria staff will contact the Nutrition Services (NS) Office to report the student's name. The NS office will contact the parent/guardian to see if assistance is needed.

### **Delinquent Meal Accounts**

Below are the procedures that will be followed for delinquent meal accounts:

- Step 1. After the initial call is made within ten days after the first meal is given without payment, cafeteria staff will call parents/guardians once per week informing them of their student's delinquent meal account. In addition to personal calls, automated calls will be made twice per month. The student may bring money to school to pay for meals, any excess money will be applied to the student's delinquent meal account.
- Step 2. If no response or payment is made on the delinquent meal account within 30 days, the account will be turned over to the NS Department. A phone call will be made to the parent/guardian to discuss lenient payment options.
- Step 3. If no response or payment is made on the delinquent meal account within 45 days, a formal letter will be sent to the parent/guardian requesting immediate payment.

Federal guidelines prohibit Child Nutrition Programs from dismissing bad debt. All fees associated with our collection efforts, as well as the outstanding balance, are the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

We care about your child's nutritional needs and provide meals that meet or exceed USDA requirements. Please visit the Twin Rivers Nutrition Services Department webpage for our full Meal Payment Policy, meal application options, menus, special diets, and more.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider