



THE SCHOOLS OF MCKEEL ACADEMY

Meal Account Policy

Participation in National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

As part of the NSLP and School Breakfast Program (SBP), TSMA is able to offer free or reduced meal benefits to families that qualify. Student eligibility will be determined based on information given regarding a household's application and on the Income Eligibility Guidelines published each year by the USDA (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/income-eligibility-guidelines>).

Application for Free/Reduced Meals

Only one application is needed per household if all students attend in the same district (TSMA is a separate district from Polk County Schools). An application is only valid for one school year but may be completed at any time during that school year, especially if a household's income or size changes. An application is not retroactive; please complete at the beginning of each school year or immediately upon a qualifying change in family situation. Free/Reduced status is confidential and there are no external identifying procedures in the cafeteria.

Visit www.mckeelschools.com/wildcatcafe and click on the "Apply Online" icon to complete the application online. If you do not have internet access, you may request to complete the application at your child's school.

Checking Free/Reduced Eligibility Status

Within 48 hours of an application being submitted, a parent or guardian can check the student's eligibility status online at <https://www.school lunchstatus.com/>. This site can be used at any time throughout the year to confirm the student's current status and to print an eligibility letter, if desired.

Funding a Meal Account

TSMA utilizes My School Bucks (www.myschoolbucks.com) as a convenient way to monitor and manage your student(s) account. This is a free site to monitor the account; if you wish to use this method to pay with a credit card or e-check as a secure method of payment, there is a small per-transaction fee. You can also set up automatic deposits into your student's account(s) at a certain date or funding level of your choice. Less securely, you may send cash or check to school with your student.

Negative Meal Account Balances

My School Bucks notifies any subscribed parents via email when meal account balances are low. Food Service staff run and monitor low balance reports daily and discreetly let students know if their accounts have a low balance at the point of sale. In the event an account becomes negative, a student will not be denied a complete lunch; however, there may be alternate entrée items and the student is no longer permitted to purchase a la carte items. The following additional steps will be taken:

Elementary locations

Students are notified discreetly of negative balance by cafeteria staff, and negative balance letters are sent home weekly. Once a negative balance reaches \$10, the food service manager will contact the parent. If a negative balance continues to accrue to \$20, the principal will contact the parent. At a \$30 negative balance, a meeting will be set up with the parents, principal, and food service manager to discuss payment plan options.

High school location

Students are notified discreetly of negative balance by cafeteria staff. Once a negative balance reaches \$20, the food service manager will contact the parent. If a negative balance continues to

accrue to \$30, a meeting will be set up with the parents, principal, and food service manager to discuss payment plan options.

Payment Plans

TSMA will work with families on a case-by-case basis to determine a viable payment plan. If applicable, at each point of contact noted above, the reminder to consider applying for free or reduced lunch status will be given; however, determination of free or reduced eligibility is not retroactive. The principal may also consider other suitable methods of settling meal account debts in certain situations and reserves the right to conduct fundraising efforts or utilize other creative, community-building efforts to assist families in paying off meal account debt. If the family desires, any such efforts would be conducted anonymously.

Alternate Meals

A student at any location with an unpaid balance over \$30 will continue to receive a normal breakfast and his or her account will continue to be charged the standard price for the meal. At lunch service, the student will receive an alternate entrée item but will be able to choose the fruit, vegetable, and milk required to make it a reimbursable meal. The cost of this meal continues to accrue on the student's account based on the paid/free/reduced eligibility level of the account.

Additional Consequences

TSMA desires that each student will receive adequate nutrition during the school day to focus on learning and will not withhold meals from a student; however, if payment plans are disregarded by the parent, other consequences, such as restricting field trips and/or extracurricular activities, may occur. Debts can roll over from previous years, and TSMA reserves the right to make additional collection attempts if all other avenues fail.

Communication

TSMA has this policy available for convenient viewing at www.mckeelschools.com/wildcatcafe. This policy will also be communicated at the beginning of the school year - or at the time of enrollment - in the same manner as other items in the student orientation packet, which may include print, online, or email versions. A parent or guardian can request a copy of this policy by contacting the student's reception desk. A copy of this policy will be enclosed or offered with initial notification of delinquent debt.

Principals, Food Service staff and any other TSMA employees who are responsible for the policy enforcement will be informed of the policy and receive a written or electronic copy. Food Service staff are trained at the beginning of each school year, or time of hire, on this and all Food Service policies.

This policy, as well as all items referred to in this policy, will be made available in alternate languages upon request.

Cafeteria Supervisors:

McKeel Academy Central:	South McKeel Academy:	McKeel Academy of Technology:	TSMA Food Service Manager:
Juanita Salazar	Yanet Quiros	Jill Walsh	Mark Nations
MACcafeteria@mckeelschools.com	SMACafeteria@mckeelschools.com	MATcafeteria@mckeelschools.com	marknations@mckeelschools.com
863-680-2512	863-665-4519	863-499-2820	863-999-3715

Websites for Food Service information and application:

To apply online for free or reduced lunch: <https://www.heartlandapps.com/>
To check status of free or reduced application: <https://www.schoolslunchstatus.com/>
My School Bucks: <https://www.myschoolbucks.com/>
McKeel Cafeteria main website: <http://www.mckeelschools.com/wildcatcafe>
McKeel Cafeteria menus: <http://mckeelschools.nutrislice.com/menu/>