

St Bernadette Catholic School
Old Keene Mill Rd · Springfield, VA 22152
(703)451-8696



MEAL CHARGE POLICY

The school nutrition department is committed to providing students with healthy, nutritious meals each day so they can focus on school work, while also maintaining the financial integrity of meal programs and minimizing any impact on students with meal charges. However, unpaid meal charges place a large financial burden on the school, as food services is a self-supporting entity within the school. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with federal reporting requirements of the USDA Child Nutrition Program, as well as provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances.

The provisions of this policy pertain to all school meals under the USDA Child Nutrition Program. The school will provide a regular meal to students who forget or lose their lunch money. The parent/guardian is responsible for any meal charges incurred.

Meal Charges and Balances

Students will be charged for meals at the regular rate approved by the school and for their meal status (regular, reduced-price, or free) each day. Payment options will be delineated, on the St Bernadette Catholic School website, in newsletters and provided to parents of incoming students. After the balance reaches zero and enters the negative, students will not be allowed to purchase a la carte items including but not limited to a second entrée, snack, ice cream, or an additional beverage. The student will still be allowed to take a meal, and that meal will continue to be charged to the account at the standard lunch rate based on their meal status. The parent/guardian is responsible for any meal charges incurred. If a student's meal status changes from paid to free or reduced, during the school year, any charges incurred prior to the status change are the responsibility of the parent/guardian. If there is a financial hardship, a parent/guardian should contact the Principal directly to discuss payment options such as an individualized repayment plan.

Payments

Parents/Guardians are responsible for all meal payments to the food service program. Notices of low or deficit balances will be sent directly to parent/guardians via email or regular postal mail at regular intervals during the school year. If notices do not result in payment, the school will contact the parents/guardians responsible for the payment. If parents/guardians have issues with student purchases they should contact the Food Service Director for assistance.

Parents/Guardians may pay for meals in advance. Further details are available on the school's webpage. Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a child may be without meal money on any given day. Any remaining funds for a particular student, whether positive or negative, will be carried over to the next school year.

The school cafeteria uses a computerized point-of-sale register system that maintains records of all monies deposited and spent for each student and those records are available to parents by setting up an online account (see school's website for more details) or by speaking with the school's front office. The point-of-sale system is designed to prevent direct identification of a student's meal status. Parents/guardians are encouraged to set up automated low-balance email alerts through the online payment system. If notices do not result in payment, parents will receive a phone call. If the phone call does not result in payment the Food Service Director shall turn the account over to the business office.

Refunds

Positive balances of graduating students with a sibling in the school, will automatically transfer to the sibling's account after graduation. If there is no sibling in the school, the refund will automatically be mailed to the parents/guardians after the students have graduated, if their balance is greater than \$10.

Delinquent Accounts/Collections

Failure of a parent or guardian to maintain reasonably current accounts may result in a referral to the Principal for her review. The Principal shall ensure that there are appropriate and effective collection procedures and internal controls within the school's business office that meet the requirements of law.

If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the administration may investigate the situation more closely and take further action as needed. If financial hardship exists, parents and families are encouraged to apply for free or reduced price lunches for their student. The school's website shall contain detailed instructions for parental assistance.

Policy Communications

This policy shall be communicated to all staff and families at the beginning of each school year and to families transferring to the school during the year.

St Bernadette Catholic School insures equal employment and educational opportunities for its employees and students and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, gender identity, disability, or sexual orientation.