

**NEWMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS
FOOD SERVICES
UNPAID MEAL POLICY**

Parent and Guardian Responsibilities

It is the expectation that parents and/or guardians provide sufficient access to food for their child each day. If families choose to participate in our food services program, parents and/or guardians are expected to monitor and manage their child's food services account, ensuring that the account maintains a positive balance. Food service accounts can be accessed and monitored through Skyward, and food service payments can be made through eFunds or at our central office. Families needing assistance with Skyward and/or eFunds may contact our Food Services Coordinator.

Access to School Meals and Other Food Items

Students

Our food service program operates on a prepayment basis. Students choosing to participate in our food services program should have sufficient funds in their account prior to purchasing food. However, a student may occasionally wish to receive food in our cafeterias that the student does not have enough money to pay for in a food services account. Unless the student's parent or guardian has made alternative arrangements with the school, these situations will be handled as follows:

1. **Students (Grades K – 5)** may charge the cost of school lunches with a negative balance. Upon reaching a negative balance of \$10.00, collection efforts will be initiated with parents/guardians.
2. **Students (Grades 6-12)** may charge the cost of reimbursable lunches only up to a negative balance of \$20.00. At this amount the student account will be deactivated until payment is made. Parents/Guardians will be notified by letter and phone that the food service account has been deactivated.
3. **A la Carte** (extra items available to students in grades 6-12) privileges are suspended when a student's balance becomes negative. The ability to purchase a la carte items will be restored when the account balance has a positive balance of at least \$5.00.

If a student's household has a negative food service balance, a student will always be permitted to select and receive a regular school lunch at the time of meal service if either:

1. Newman Catholic Schools has determined that the student is currently eligible to receive free lunches at school; or
2. The student has enough money in hand, to pay for the meal on the day the meal is purchased; or
3. The parent/guardian has contacted the school's Food Service Coordinator and has made arrangements for payment of the negative balance; or
4. The student has tray in hand at the point of sale cashier area.

Staff

Staff may purchase lunches or other items in our cafeterias. If necessary, staff may accrue a negative balance of \$10.00. If a negative balance of \$10.00 is reached, the account will be placed on hold until payment is received.

Negative Account Balances and Collection Procedures

A negative balance in a family's food service account is a debt owed by the student's parent or guardian.

Once a student's account has a negative balance, the school will make an initial and follow-up attempt to collect the debt by providing the student's parent or guardian with notice (by mail, email, and/or phone) of the amount owed. Payment is due immediately upon notice. If these attempts are not successful, a school official will attempt to make contact or schedule a meeting with a parent or guardian. The school and the parent/guardian may discuss payment plan options.

If a negative balance still has not been paid after the collection efforts described in the previous paragraph, parents and guardians should be aware of the following:

1. The school may continue to pursue collection efforts. This may include referral of the debt to a collection service or initiating an action in small claims court. Before these steps are taken, the school will communicate the intended course of action to the person responsible for payment with a final notice of the amount due.
2. Debt in a food service account is not automatically discharged, forgiven, or reduced at the end of the school year or due to a change in a student's enrollment status (graduation, transfer, etc.)

Account Refunds

If money is left in a food service account when a family leaves Newman Catholic Schools due to graduation or transfer, parents/guardians have the option of either donating the excess funds to the Meal Assistance Account or they may receive a refund. The Meal Assistance Account is used to assist families in financial need with outstanding food service balances. Families not donating to the Meal Assistance Account will receive a refund by mail if the food service account balance is greater than \$15.00. Families with account balances less than \$15.00 must pick up a refund in person at our Central Office within 30 days of notification. Funds less than \$15.00 remaining after 30 days from notification will be placed into the Meal Assistance Account.