

The Villages[®] Charter School

Meal Charge Policy

The Villages Charter School recognizes that unpaid meal charges represent a difficult and complex issue for the families we serve and our food service department. We must balance our desire to provide for hungry children lacking the means to pay for meals with the demands of maintaining the financial viability of our school food service operation.

Overcoming the Unpaid Meal Challenge

To prevent children who are eligible for free or reduced priced school meals from accruing unpaid meal charges, The Villages Charter School Food Service Department communicates in multiple ways to ensure families are informed; minimizing barriers to participation, and ensuring timely and easy certification of children eligible for free and reduced price meals. Here are just a few habits or reminders to adopt to help overcome the unpaid meal challenge.

- Return your application prior to the first day reimbursable meals are offered and/or as soon as their enrollment is accepted.
- Electronic or paper applications are accepted at any point during the school year.
- If you experience a change in financial circumstances, such as a job loss or long-term illness, this could result in a change of eligibility status for your child.
- Limit the amount of funds your child could use daily, particularly for à la carte purchases. The EZSchoolPay pre-payment system includes a feature to allow for parental restrictions at the point of service.
- Regularly check what your child is spending and the items they're buying by registering for a free EZSchoolPay account.
- Use the convenience of adding money electronically from a computer or mobile device using EZSchoolPay (payments are always accepted at the school).
- Set up automatic payments and payment reminders using EZSchoolPay.

Meal Charge Policy- Full Pay

Students pre-pay for meals at the published standard full pay rate. Students are allowed a credit limit to charge meals & a la carte items up to \$20.00. Low balance reminders are sent to all families at the beginning of each week and continue weekly until the account exceeds \$5.00. In the instance an account accrues a negative balance an email is sent at the end of the week to the families and continues weekly until the account exceeds -\$0.01. If an account exceeds a negative balance of \$20.00 an alternate meal will be served.

Meal Charge Policy- Reduced

Students pre-pay for meals at the published standard full pay rate. Students are allowed a credit limit to charge meals & a la carte items up to \$7.50. Low balance reminders are sent to all

families at the beginning of each week and continue weekly until the account exceeds \$5.00. In the instance an account accrues a negative balance an email is sent at the end of the week to the families and continues weekly until the account exceeds -\$0.01. If an account exceeds a negative balance of \$20.00 an alternate meal will be served.

Meal Charge Policy- Free

Student pre-pay for a-la-carte items at the published rate. Students are allowed a credit limit to charge a la carte items up to \$5.00. Low balance reminders are sent to all families at the beginning of each week and continue weekly until the account exceeds \$5.00. In the instance an account accrues a negative balance an email is sent to the families at the end of each week and continues weekly until the account exceeds -\$0.01.

Children who qualify for free meals will never be denied a meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from other purchases in the cafeteria. A full meal consists of a minimum of 3 out of 5 food groups.

If in the event the student does not select at least 3 of the 5 components, the cashier will suggest a choice of the missing component(s). If 3 of the 5 components are not selected, a la carte prices will be charged per item if the credit limit is available.