



Frequently Asked Questions NPS Food Service Program

FOOD SERVICE

What is the goal of food service at NPS?

Together with our food service partner Sodexo, we aim to deliver healthy and delicious school meals based on the USDA's nutrition guidelines. We know that when students have access to healthy meals, they are more engaged and ready to learn.

What does a “meal” include?

All meals include a protein, a carbohydrate, fresh fruit and vegetable choices, as well as beverage options, including non-fat or low-fat milk. At the middle and high school levels, a la carte items such as snacks and beverages are available for purchase.

Where can I see what is on the menu?

You can visit the Newton Public Schools homepage and click on the pink “Food Service and Menus” button. You can also find it here: <https://newton.sodexomyway.com/> and on the NPS app.

HOW TO PURCHASE A MEAL

What is the process to purchase a meal at school?

At the beginning of the year, teachers and staff at all schools will explain to students the process for purchasing a meal in the cafeteria. In elementary school, they will also be sure to let you know what time lunch is every day so that you can plan accordingly with your student. Please know that NPS staff is always on hand in the cafeterias to assist students, especially our younger students, in purchasing a meal.

How does my child pay for a meal?

Your student may pay with cash at the register. Or if you prefer, you can add funds to your child's “meal account” via check or at MySchoolBucks.com, our online meal account information system. Their purchase will then be charged against this meal account.

Is my student automatically given a meal account?

Yes, all students in the Newton Public Schools are given a meal account. You can access this account by setting up a login and password at MySchoolBucks.com. At MySchoolBucks.com, you can view transactions for the past 90 days and current account balances. You also have the option to add funds to the meal account for a convenience fee of \$2.00.



How is the meal account charged?

In elementary school, your student may use a card with their name on it at the register as they check out. Some elementary schools do not use a card, in which case your student will simply tell the cashier his/her name. In middle and high school, students will key in their student ID number at the register. At all schools, the student's account includes a picture to verify their identity at the point of sale. The meal is then charged against the account.

In elementary school, where do they get a card and what happens if my student forgets to bring it to the cafeteria?

Your student may receive a card with his/her name and student ID number on it. If your school uses cards (some do not) the card is handed to the cashier after the meal is selected. The purchase is then deducted from the meal account. If your elementary student forgets the card, it is not a problem. The staff person will simply ask them their first and last name and their purchase will be recorded. For schools that do not use cards, the student provides their name to the cashier.

Do they need my permission to purchase a meal?

Federal law prohibits schools from denying any child a meal. Therefore, staff will not ask your child if they have permission to purchase lunch or any a la carte items.

How do I prevent my child from buying food?

Because we are prohibited by law from denying a student a meal, we ask that you please have a conversation with your child about the meals and items they may or may not purchase from the cafeteria. If it continues to be an issue, please contact your child's teacher or principal. They will work with food service to place a note on your child's account identifying any restrictions.

PAYMENTS

How do I put money on my child's lunch account?

MySchoolBucks.com is the district's online tool to manage your student's meal account. You may use MySchoolBucks to add funds to your student's account, pay balances, and view purchases, Please note that a \$2.00 transaction fee will apply when adding funds via MySchoolBucks.

If you prefer, you may add funds or pay balances via check. Please make checks payable to NPS Food Service, write your child's name in the note section, and send to: NPS Food Service, 457 Walnut St. Newton, MA 02460.



How do I check my student’s meal account balance?

The best way to check your account balance is to log into MySchoolBucks. If it is your first time logging in, you will be asked to create a username and password. You can also download the MySchoolBucks app. Even if you choose to pay via check, MySchoolBucks is the best way to view your student’s purchases and meal account balance.

What if I forget to add funds to my student’s meal account and they have a zero or negative balance?

Federal law prohibits schools from denying a meal to a student. Your student will not be denied a meal. We understand it can be challenging to remember to check the balance and add funds. However, negative meal account balances do impact the school operating budget. Our operations department is working with the Newton School Committee to create a policy to address negative meal account balances and to help families keep their account in good standing.

How do I request a transfer or refund?

If you wish to transfer funds and you are the account holder named on your students’ account, email the Food & Nutrition Office Manager at Esther.Rivera@Sodexo.com and provide the names of your students and the dollar amount to be transferred.

To request a refund, email the Director of Food and Nutrition at Rachel.Oppenheimer@Sodexo.com and provide the following information:

- Student Name:
- Student ID Number:
- Parent Name:
- Amount Request:
- Mailing Address:
- Contact phone number:

Please note that refunds take 4 – 6 weeks to arrive.

ALLERGIES

What do I do if my child has food allergies?

If your child has allergies, it is important that you contact your school nurse directly. The school nurse will work with you to develop an allergy plan that is specific to the needs of your child. We work closely with the Newton Public School nurses to ensure your child can safely access our food service programs.



FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH PROGRAM

How do I know if my child qualifies for a free and reduced meal?

You can check eligibility by completing the online form. Online applications are processed quickly and you will receive an answer within a few days. If you do qualify, this information will be provided to the Newton Public Schools and noted on your child's account.

What is included in a Free and Reduced meal? Is it different from other meals served?

The free and reduced meal is exactly the same as the meal served to students who do not participate in the program. It consists of a protein, carbohydrate, beverage, and fruit or vegetable. Students in the program pay less for their meal, but this information is kept confidential. Please note, however, that snacks and extra a la carte items are not reduced and must be purchased at full price.