

Q&A for School Meals

Q. Are school meals free this year?

A. Meals will be served at no charge to all students enrolled in Houston County Schools regardless of whether they are attending learning in person or virtually.

Q. Why are student meals free this year?

A. Due to the COVID pandemic, USDA issued several waivers to allow programs to streamline service. It is a temporary suspension of normal operations through the end of school year 2022. Meals will be served at no charge to all students enrolled in Houston County Schools regardless of whether they are attending learning in person or virtually.

Q. If meals are free, can teachers or other adults also eat at no charge?

A. Houston County School Nutrition is a federal child nutrition program, and it only receives federal funding to provide meals to children. We welcome any school staff to eat with us, however, these meals must be paid for by the adult at the register or with an account at www.myschoolbucks.com.

Q. During the summer months, I picked up meals packs for all the children in my family. Is that service available during the 2021-2022 school year?

A. At this time, meal packs will only be prepared for students enrolled in Houston Virtual.

Q. I have student that is enrolled in Houston Virtual. How can he have access to school meals?

A. Houston Virtual students may pick up a meal pack at no charge each Wednesday between 9:00-9:30 am at any high school using the parent drop off lane or the bus lane. The meal pack will include 5 breakfasts and 5 lunches, including fruits, vegetables, and milk. Students are not required to be in the vehicle at the time of meal pick up. Please place the name of the Houston Virtual Student and their lunch number on an 8.5 x 11 piece of paper and place it on the passenger side dashboard of the vehicle.

Q. Where can I find breakfast and lunch menus for each month?

A. Menus are posted online at www.hcbe.net/schoolnutrition

Q. Can my child purchase snacks and beverages in the cafeteria?

A. Yes. Any student may purchase a snack or beverage at the register using either cash or money posted to an account via check, cash, or www.myschoolbucks.com.

Q. Can I purchase ice cream, cookies, chips, or other snacks for my child's classroom in order to celebrate a special occasion such as a birthday, the end of testing, or other holiday?

A. Yes! Your cafeteria manager can help you coordinate a simple way to provide a treat for your child and their classmates. Just let us know what you would like to provide, and we will work with the teacher to take care of everything for you!

Q. How do I know if I qualify for P-EBT benefits for last school year?

A. P-EBT benefits are administered through the Department of Family and Children Services. As this benefit is not administered through the Houston County School District, we are unable to provide details on this topic. Please visit <https://dfcs.georgia.gov/pandemic-electronic-benefit-transfer> for more information.

Q&A for My School Bucks

Q. If meals are free, do I need to do anything with my MySchoolBucks account?

A. No. Money left on your student's account will remain there until used. We expect to serve meals at no charge through the 2021-2022 school year. However, snacks and beverages will be available for your student to purchase. Money on accounts can be used for these purchases.

Q. If there is money on my child's account, can the funds expire?

A. No. Money left on your student's account will remain there until used.

Q. May I request a refund for money left on my student's account?

A. Yes. You may request a refund. Refunds under \$5.00 may be handled at your school location. For a refund of anything over \$5.00, please email schoolnutrition@hcbe.net.

Q. If I have multiple children enrolled, can I transfer money from one child's account to another?

A. Yes. In order to move funds from one student's account to another, please email schoolnutrition@hcbe.net.

Q. Can staff use MySchoolBucks to purchase meals?

A. Yes. Please send an email to schoolnutrition@hcbe.net to set up an adult account.