

Food Service Department

Information Packet

Austintown Schools





Food Service Information School Year 2018 – 2019

The Austintown Schools Food Service Department is a self-funded entity. Our success comes from your support!

Contact Information

Food Service Director: Alexis Weber, RDN, LD
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 Website: AFFoodServices.com

National School Lunch Program & School Breakfast Program

Austintown Local Schools offer breakfast and lunch each day in partnership with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA recognizes 5 food groups important at each meal: Grains (G), Meat/Meat Alternatives (MMA), Fruit (F), Vegetable (V), and Dairy (D). Our staff is here to guide and educate our students on the importance of eating a complete meal and we will encourage them to make healthy decisions when choosing their breakfast or lunch.

Offer vs. Serve

Each cafeteria offers our menu options to students for them to choose their own meal, versus serving them. Lunch prices are based on a complete meal. When your child is in line, they will have the opportunity to choose or deny parts of the meal. In order for a meal to be complete they must select at least 3 meal components, with at least 1 component being a fruit or vegetable. Students can always choose to take all 5 components.

Elementary School

Example Menu:	Example Meal #1	Example Meal #2	Example Meal #3	Incomplete Meal
Beef Taco (MMA/G)	Beef Taco (MMA/G)	Beef Taco (MMA/G)	Carrot sticks (V)	Beef Taco (MMA/G)
Carrot sticks (V)	Carrot sticks (V)	Apple Slices (F)	Apple Slices (F)	Milk (D)
Apple Slices (F)	Milk (D)		Milk (D)	
Milk (D)				
5 components \$2.40	4 components \$2.40	3 components \$2.40	3 components \$2.40	3 components \$2.50*

*\$2.00 Taco + \$0.50 Milk = \$2.50
No fruit or vegetable

Menus and Pricing

Each school develops a monthly menu while considering age appropriate options and variety. It is important for growing minds to have balanced nutrition so we encourage our students to take all 5 meal components in their lunch. Lunch prices are subject to change every school year. The 2017-2018 meal and component prices are as follows:

School	Lunch	Breakfast	Milk	Entrée	Side	WAM*
Fitch High School	\$3.00	\$1.50	\$0.50	\$2.00/\$1.75	\$0.50	\$1.00
Middle School	\$2.85	\$1.50	\$0.50	\$2.00/\$1.75	\$0.50	\$1.00
Intermediate School	\$2.85	\$1.50	\$0.50	\$2.00/\$1.75	\$0.50	\$1.00
Elementary School	\$2.40	\$1.50	\$0.50	\$2.00/\$1.75	\$0.50	\$1.00

*WAM stands for "with a meal". If your child would like a second entrée, the price is \$1.00 as long as they also purchase a complete meal.

Student ID Number & Biometrics

Each student is assigned a student ID number which is also their cafeteria number. This number can be obtained through Progress Book or by contacting your building secretary. Students will enter their number on a keypad when they are at the register. AES and AIS are also implementing a biometrics system which helps with accuracy and lunch line speed. The index finger is scanned for identification. Please visit our website for more information: AFFoodServices.com.

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Extras & À la Carte

We do not limit what your child can purchase, so long as they have a positive balance in their account. If a student has a negative balance in their account and they have cash to buy extras or à la carte items, we will refuse the sale until the negative balance is resolved. If a parent would like to restrict a purchase limit on their student's account they need to call the Food Service Office at (330) 797-3900 ext. 2032.

Charging Meals

We will never refuse to serve a meal to a student. In the event that your child forgot their packed lunch or their lunch money, they may charge complete meals in our cafeteria. Extras and à la carte items can never be charged. Once they charge more than \$5.00 the Food Service Department will make repeated notification to the family until the balance is resolved. This balance is considered a school fee and carries with each student throughout their tenure in our district. Negative balances MUST be paid in order for report cards to be distributed, transcripts to be given, or seniors to walk at commencement.

Free and Reduced Price Meals

We encourage all our Falcon Families to apply for meal benefits. Free and Reduced Lunch applications are only good for one school year so everyone MUST re-apply EACH SCHOOL YEAR, regardless of their eligibility the previous year.

If you would like to apply, please go to **LUNCHAPPLICATION.COM** or visit our website, AFFoodServices.com for the link to apply online. You can also request a paper application at your child's school or print one from our website. We work diligently to process applications as soon as they are received, however applying online will reduce processing time. You will be notified via postal mail on your eligibility for these benefits once the application is processed. Ultimately, it is the family's responsibility to ensure we received your application – let us know if you don't hear from us.

Until the application is approved, you agree to pay the full price for meals served in the cafeteria or pack a lunch for your child. Families are responsible for ALL meal charges that occur before a Free or Reduced application is approved. Your eligibility DOES NOT back date or cover the cost of charged meals, so be sure to apply promptly.

Lunch Account Information

We encourage parents to utilize the online K-12 Payment Center at K12PaymentCenter.com to add funds into their student's account. Creating an account is free and gives you access to set up low balance alerts, view meal history, and transfer lunch account funds between your student accounts. There is a small transaction fee when you make an online payment. These funds are deposited automatically into the student's account.

You may also send money to school with your child to be added to their account during lunch. Please send cash or check (made out to their school cafeteria, i.e. Austintown Elementary School Cafeteria) in a sealed envelope labeled "LUNCH MONEY" with their student ID number and full name. If you have three (3) checks returned NSF, we will no longer accept checks as payment. You will have to send cash, or use K12PaymentCenter.com.

Food Allergies

Please see the **Food Allergy Information** form in your packet or on our Food Service website for detailed information on how we handle life-threatening food allergies. Food Services works with the school clinic to update food allergy information from the **Emergency Medical Form** annually. Life-threatening food allergies are observed with proper documentation. Food preferences and substitutions are not observed. Each cafeteria offers several menu choices for our students and they may refuse any item they do not wish to take. Please call our office to discuss the specific allergies of your student.



Food Allergy Information

Austintown Schools Food Service Department
AFFoodServices@austintownschoools.org | (330) 797-3900 ext. 2032

Please fill out the district Emergency Medical Form promptly. The clinic updates Food Services annually with student allergen information. Food Service clears and updates allergens each school year.

The Austintown Local School District Food Service Department strives to serve meals that are nutritious and safe. We take life-threatening food allergies seriously and want to do our best to protect our students. The following outlines how Food Services observes food allergies, intolerances, and preferences:

Life-threatening Food Allergies

We observe life-threatening food allergies as ones in which a student has prescription medication on file with the school clinic. These students could have trouble breathing, break out in hives, or go into anaphylactic shock from eating a food item they are allergic to, which is considered life-threatening. Based on the Emergency Medical Form, Food Services sets an alert on your student's lunch account notifying our staff of the life-threatening allergy and prohibiting your child from purchasing such items. We offer few menu items that contain life-threatening allergens like peanuts or tree nuts, but it does not eliminate the possibility of exposure to allergens. **It is possible that cross-contact may occur.** Cross-contact is when a food item with an allergen (for example peanuts), touches another food item that does not normally have exposure to allergens (such as carrots).

Food Intolerances

If your student is intolerant of a food item, we will do our best to ensure they do not receive that food item. The biggest occurrence of intolerance is lactose (or sugar) in milk. If your student is intolerant of regular milk, they may choose to take lactose-free milk. Juice is not an allowable substitute per the USDA. Water is also accessible in each cafeteria in the district.

As stated above, we take allergies serious, so please be clear about your student's dietary needs.

- 1) **Milk Allergy** – A milk allergy means your child is allergic to the protein in milk and ingesting it means it could threaten their life. If you inform us that your student has a milk allergy, we will refuse to serve them anything with milk protein in it such as chocolate milk, pizza, cheese sticks, yogurt, toasted cheese, macaroni and cheese, etc.
- 2) **Milk Intolerance** – A milk intolerance means your child is intolerant of lactose in milk and they could have an upset stomach or discomfort. If they are intolerant of regular milk but may have cheese or other milk products, then you must specify that to us.

Food Preferences

Because life-threatening food allergies are of utmost importance to the safety of our students, we cannot observe food preferences. Every cafeteria offers several different choices of each food component each day. If pineapple is offered and your student does not like pineapple, they may refuse it and choose another fruit offering. Religious and ethnic dietary needs are observed if we are notified.

Notifying Food Services

Please help us teach your children with allergies the food items they must avoid. Ultimately, it is the parents' responsibility to ensure Food Services has the most updated allergy information for our students. We do our best to include the allergy information of our menu items on our website, AFFoodServices.com (hover over each menu item to see allergy information). If you would like to have a specific conversation with Food Services about your student's needs, please call our office at (330) 797-3900 ext 2032.

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Free And Reduced Meal Applications Are Now Electronic!

Please visit LUNCHAPPLICATION.COM to apply online after July 1st

Dear Parent/Guardian

We are offering online applications as a way to help you and our school district process Free and Reduced meal applications more efficiently and prevent the limitation of paper applications.

Benefits to applying online:

- Applications are processed much faster
- Instant email notification of eligibility status
- The website walks you through each step of the application

Unfortunately, traditional paper applications can...

...mistakenly get lost in the shuffle

...take up to 10 days to be processed

...be deemed incomplete and unable to be processed.... So please apply online!

FAQ's

When can I apply?

Applications open July 1st the summer before school starts. We accept applications throughout the entire school year. If your household situation changes at some point throughout the year, you are always welcome to reapply.

When do meal benefits begin?

Free and Reduced Meal benefits begin the date an application is **processed by the Food Service Department**, not the date it was turned in. Until meal benefits are approved, the family is responsible for providing money or a packed lunch for their student. We cannot waive meal charges made during this time, even if you qualify for free meals. It is the family's responsibility to pay off all charges in full.

Do I need to apply each year?

YES! The Free and Reduced Meal Program is an **opt-in** program, meaning each family must reapply every school year. The US Government requires that an application is filled out completely and properly each year. Your eligibility may change, as the qualifications change each year. There is no harm in applying, so apply each year.

How will I know you received my application?

It is your responsibility to see that we receive your application (this is why we recommend you apply online – it can't get lost). We send out letters when we process your application. The letters notify you that your application was either: approved-free, approved-reduced, denied, or incomplete. You may always reapply.

How can I track my student(s)'s lunch account(s)?

K12PaymentCenter.com - Please create a free account to pay meal charges, add money to their account(s), set up low-balance email and text alerts, and track what items they are buying.

Feel free to contact the Food Service Department if you have any questions. You may request a paper application from your building secretary or print one from our website at AFFoodServices.com

330-797-3900 ext. 2032
The Food Service Office

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Frequently Asked Questions Food Service School Year 2018 – 2019

How can I contact the Food Service Department?

Phone: (330) 797-3900 ext. 2032

Email: AFFoodServices@austintownschools.org

Where can I find information about the Food Service Department at Austintown Schools?

The Food Service Department has their own website: AFFoodServices.com

Please check out our website to find information on:

- Links to Applying for Free/Reduced Priced Meals (LunchApplication.com)
- Links to viewing and adding money to your student's lunch account (K12PaymentCenter.com)
- Current Breakfast & Lunch Menus
- Nutrition information
- Department Policies

What is the role of the Food Service Department?

Food Services first and foremost ensures a smooth meal program for breakfast and lunch at each building. However, there are many other aspects to our department. We process and document all of the Free and Reduced lunch applications, document meal count reports to the State, maintain a proper district Wellness Policy, work with the PTA to provide foods and beverages at school functions, and operate as a self-funded entity to conserve district funds.

What is my Student's Lunch ID number?

Your student's Lunch ID number is the same as their school ID number. This 4 or 6 digit number was created for your student at the time of their enrollment. You can get this number by asking the secretary at your school, calling the Food Services Office (ext. 2032), calling Registration (ext. 1516), or on a report card. This number stays with your student through all their years here at Austintown Local Schools.

How can I apply for free or reduced priced meals?

We encourage all of our Falcon families to apply for Free or Reduced Priced meals at LunchApplication.com. This is the quickest, most efficient way to submit an application.

My household received free meals last year, do I need to apply this year?

YES! The Free or Reduced Price Meal Program is an **OPT-IN** program administered by the federal government. If you do not completely fill out an application each school year, we will assume you do not wish to participate in the program. You will receive an approval or denial letter via postal mail with your meal benefits status.

Can I request a paper application?

You can request a paper application at your school's main office. However, please be aware that the processing of paper applications can take 2 weeks after Food Services receives your application. Unfortunately, paper application can get lost in the shuffle of back to school paperwork. It is ultimately the household's responsibility to make sure the Food Service Office received your application.

I sent in a paper application but I have not heard back from the school. What happened?

If you have not heard from us via postal mail within 2 weeks, you must call Food Services at ext. 2032. Until your application is processed and you are approved for free or reduced priced meals, it is the family's responsibility to provide enough lunch money or a packed lunch for your child. Charges accumulated during this processing period will NOT be forgiven, even if you are approved for free meals. So please apply online at LunchApplication.com.

I received a Direct Certification letter before school started. What does this mean?

This letter notifies you that your household was Directly Certified for free meals via the Ohio Department of Education and you **DO NOT** need to apply via an application. Please be sure each and every one of your students is on this letter and contact our office directly in order to add any missing students to your benefits. Only the Food Services Office can add a missing student. Additionally, because your household was approved for free meals, you are also eligible to opt-out of paying school fees. You must sign and return the entire letter to waive your school fees and allow us to share this information with the building secretary.

What if my student goes to the cafeteria to eat and does not have money?

The Austintown Schools Board of Education requires us to serve meals to all children regardless of their ability to pay. If your student comes to the cafeteria to eat we will feed them and charge the meal price to their lunch account. If you do not want your student to utilize the cafeteria, please call the Food Service Office to apply a restriction to their account. The family is responsible for all charges applied to their student's account.

What is the district's meal charge policy?

Meals charged in the cafeteria are considered school fees and can never be waived. These charges carry on with a student throughout their time as an Austintown student. Once a student has charged more than \$5.00 in the cafeteria, the Food Service Department makes repeated notification to each individual household to collect the debt. We use postal mail, email, phone calls and One Calls.

Where can I monitor activity on my student's lunch account?

Visit K12Paymentcenter.com to create a free login and access your student's lunch account (must have your student's ID number). This website allows you to monitor your student's meal purchases, setup low balance email or text alerts and make online payments with a credit/debit card.

My student has a food allergy, how can I inform the Food Service Department?

Every school year each child must have an Emergency Medical Form completed. Food allergens are marked on this form and the school clinic informs Food Services. Upon receiving this updated information, Food Services applies an alert on your student's account highlighting their food allergy to our kitchen staff. Food allergies are cleared and updated yearly so we must be notified every school year of your student's allergies. Please see the **Food Allergy Information** sheet on our website to further understand how our department handles food allergies. If you feel you need to have a specific conversation with our department, please do not hesitate to call us.

How can I add money to my students lunch account?

We encourage our families to apply funds electronically to their students account at K12PaymentCenter.com. We also accept cash or checks made out to the school cafeteria (Austintown Elementary School Cafeteria). Please send physical payments to the cafeteria in a sealed envelope marked "Lunch Money" with your student's first and last name and ID number.

How can I add a restriction to my student's account?

Please call the Food Service Office directly to add a restriction to your student's account. We have certain parameters in which we can restrict an account and want to be sure we limit the right purchases.