

Breakfast and Lunch Offered at No Cost in All Schools

The Carmel Central School District (CCSD) is now able to provide breakfast and lunch at no cost to all students in all schools. This is being made possible by the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) designation granted to the District by the New York State Education Department, and will be effective starting on Friday, December 1, 2023.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)?

A: The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a funding option under the National School Lunch Act that allows eligible schools to provide free meals to all students.

Q: Do I need to fill out an application for my child to receive meals at no cost?

A: No, families do not need to fill out an application for their child to gain eligibility for breakfast and lunch at no cost.

Q: What does CEP cover for my child?

A: With the CEP designation, all Carmel Central School District (CCSD) enrolled students can receive one healthy breakfast and one nutritious lunch per school day.

Q: I am new to the District and/or the Food Services program - what does a healthy lunch entail for my child? What about breakfast?

A: A healthy lunch always consists of five components: a protein, grain, fruit, vegetable, and milk. To be considered a full meal, children must choose at least three of these components, including either a fruit or vegetable. A full breakfast consists of four components: two grains (main entree), one cup of fruit/juice or a vegetable, one cup of milk. Students must choose three of the four components offered with one of those components being a fruit/juice or vegetable.

Q: Can my child still purchase snacks and à la carte items? What about a second breakfast or lunch?

A: Yes, snacks and à la carte items (including milk) are available. However, students will need cash or funds in their prepaid accounts to make these purchases. Also, only

the first breakfast and first lunch of the day are free. A student would need cash or funds in their prepaid accounts to pay for a second breakfast or lunch.

Q: How can I add funds to my child's account to make those types of purchases?

A: You can add funds by sending a check or cash in with your child or virtually through [MySchoolBucks](#), an online school meal payment system. To avoid the fee, students can always pay with cash for their purchase. In addition, parents may send in a check or cash to be added to the student's prepaid account.

Q: What if I already have money in my child's account for meals? Can I get it back?

A: Parents can either request a refund from the Food Services Department or leave the funds on their student's account for à la carte items or snacks. Please send an email to carmelfoodservices@carmelschools.org to request a refund. Please include the first name, last name, and ID # of the student. Also, include parent/guardian name and address where the reimbursement check should be mailed. Please note that depending on the volume of requests, refunds may take up to 45 days to process. If there is an automatic replenishment of funds set up on your student's MySchoolBucks account, please discontinue this feature before requesting meal account reimbursement.

Q: What if there is negative debt left on my child's account?

A: Free breakfasts and lunches are not retroactive, and any negative debt incurred prior to **December 1, 2023**, will remain in the student's account until payment is received.

Q: What if my child brings their own lunch and just wants some milk or a piece of fruit?

According to State guidelines, in order to access the free meal benefit, a child must take what counts as a full meal, which means choosing at least three of the five components (including a fruit or vegetable) that make up the meal. Food Services staff will guide your child in understanding what constitutes a full meal.

Q: Does funding for school meals come out of my school taxes?

A: No, meals and food at schools are not funded by your school tax dollars. Instead, the funding comes from Federal and State taxes.