

## School Meals Policy

### Policy (Purpose)

Trinity Lutheran School participates in the Minnesota Free School Meals program as outlined in [Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 124D.111, subdivision 1](#). In addition, this policy is to ensure that school district employees, families and students understand the expectations regarding unpaid meal charges.

### Meal Service

Trinity Lutheran School participates in the Minnesota Free School Meals Program, and therefore all enrolled students will be offered one breakfast and one lunch at no charge while at school regardless of an outstanding meal balance. Once a meal has been placed on a student's tray or served, it will not be taken away by the cashier or any school official, regardless of the student's meal account status. All reimbursable meals offered meet state and federal guidelines. We will not provide an alternate meal unless related to a dietary need.

### Point of service

For Trinity Lutheran School to receive State and Federal reimbursement for meals served, each student must be identified at the point of service.

1. Trinity Lutheran School's goal is to provide nutritious meals to students to promote healthy eating habits and enhance learning as well as maintain the financial integrity of the National School Breakfast and Lunch program and eliminate stigmatization of children who are unable to pay meal charges.
2. It is the policy of Trinity Lutheran School to offer breakfast and lunch meals that meet state and federal guidelines.
3. Each year the amount for Lunch and for Breakfasts will be determined by the Nicollet Public school staff and .50 cents for milk will be reimbursed with a reimbursable meal. Milk may be charged ala cart if no meal is taken. Second meals and adult meals will be charged at the years pricing.
4. Families may apply for free/reduced-price meal benefits anytime during the school year. Meal applications are distributed to all families in the district prior to the student's first day of classes. In addition, applications are available in the office during office hours. If household income or size changes, families can apply for meal benefits anytime during the school year.
5. Once a participant has placed a meal on a tray or otherwise served the meal to a student, the meal may not be subsequently withdrawn from the student by the cashier or other school official, whether or not the student has an outstanding meal balance.
6. A student who has been determined eligible for free and reduced-price lunch must always be served a reimbursable meal even if the student has an outstanding debt.

All students will be treated respectfully and in accordance with [Minnesota Statute 2024, section 124D.111, subdivision 5](#).

## **Nonprogram Food Sales**

To meet the nonprogram food revenue requirement, the nutrition program must charge and accrue revenue for items outside of the reimbursable breakfast and lunch it chooses to sell. PreK meals are considered nonprogram due to their licensing.

[Nonprogram Food Sales](#) are any food or beverage sold outside of the reimbursable meal, including second meals. This would be extra milks ordered, second meals or adult meals.

Self-operated and vended meal/Food Service Management Company-operated sites should manage second breakfasts and lunches at the site level. If you have students that want to purchase a second meal, adjust your ordering or preparation at that site as needed.

Please let Trinity know by 9:00 am if your child will be needing a meal. If you know your child is going to be absent for the day or has an appointment, let the secretary know if they will be back for lunch and would like a meal also by 9:00 am.

## **Unpaid Meal Charges**

### **Prior year unpaid meal charges**

The Minnesota Free Meals Program does not address debt incurred before the program's implementation.

## Notification of Account Status

Trinity Lutheran School will continue to utilize its local process for addressing delinquent meal accounts.

1. Balances will be charge to your Vanco account or billing will first be sent via email and if it is not resolved within 10 days a billing will be sent by mail.

- a. Families can contact the office for account balances.
- b. Households will be regularly be apprised of student meal account balances through email.

1) The student/family will be notified when the account has a positive balance .

- a. The parent/guardian will be notified via email when the household account is at \$10.00 or less.
- b. Food Service Department will encourage parents to complete the free/reduced-price meal application.
- c. An email reminder is sent to parents requesting a payment when student accounts do not have adequate funds.
- d. A second request for payment is sent if parents have not responded to the first request.
- e. A letter/invoice is sent via US Post to the household requesting payment.

## Collection of Unpaid Meal Debt

When the student meal balance is not paid by the end of the school year, Trinity Lutheran School will take the following collection actions:

The Minnesota Free School Meals Program pertains only to reimbursable meals.

- 1. Elementary: The Secretary will contact the household to request payment.
- 2. The building principal or their designee will contact the family and review with them their responsibility to provide meals for their student.
- 3. The expectation is all fees owed to the district will be paid in full on the last day the student will be attending classes.
- 4. Once an unpaid meal account is determined to be uncollectable, Trinity Lutheran School uses a collections agency to collect the funds.

Source: Independent School District **Trinity Lutheran School**

Reviewed: (Date) **March 2, 2026**

Approved: (Date) **March 2, 2026**

## **Communication Policy**

This policy and any pertinent supporting information will be provided in writing (i.e., mail, email, back-to-school packet, student handbook, etc.) to:

- All households before the start of each school year;
- Students and families who transfer into the school district, at the time of enrollment
- All school district personnel who are responsible for enforcing this policy.

*Trinity Lutheran School will post this policy on the school district's website, in addition to providing the required written notification described above.*

### **When contracting with a Food Service Management Company or Vended Meal Provider**

Trinity Lutheran School will ensure that any third-party provider with whom the school district enters into either an original or modified contract after July 1, 2021, adheres to the school district's school meals policy.

**Trinity Lutheran School**  
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To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at:

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1. **mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:** [Program.Intake@usda.gov](mailto:Program.Intake@usda.gov)

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