

Meal Charge Policy

Federal Requirement

The purpose of this policy is to address the need for school food authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) to institute and clearly communicate a meal charge policy, which would include, if applicable the availability of alternate meals. Because all students in participating schools may receive reimbursable school meals, all SFAs must have a policy in place for children who are participating at the reduced price or paid rate, but either do not have money in their account or in hand to cover the cost of the meal at the time of service. Such a policy ensures that the school food service professionals, school administrators, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations in these situations.

Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the district. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the food service department. The goals of this standard of practice are:

- To treat all students with dignity in the serving line requiring meal accounts
- To support positive situations with district staff, district business policies, student and parent/guardian to the maximum extent possible
- To establish policies that are age appropriate
- To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student
- To establish a consistent district policy regarding charges and collection of charges

Scope of Responsibility

- The administrative assistant is responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the students parent/guardian
- The parent/guardian is responsible for immediate payment

Administration

- Families are encouraged to apply for free and reduced price meal benefit. Any family that falls into a negative balance will receive a written notification to encourage them to apply for free or reduced price meal benefits.
- Families are encouraged to pre-pay for meals and money is accepted in the school office daily for payments on the day of service. Written notification of prepayment options occurs at the beginning of each school year, is given to each new transfer student, is posted on the school web site.
- Elementary/ Middle School/ High School students: Overdue slips will be sent home with students weekly during the school year. Letters will be sent the household monthly during the summer months.
 1. All delinquent accounts at the beginning of May of the current year will be subject to collections for payment.

2. If a child has money to purchase a reduced price or paid meal at the time of the meal service, the child must be provided a meal. SFAs may not use the child's money to repay previously unpaid charges if the child intended to use the money to purchase that day's meal.
 3. No charges are allowed for extra or a la carte foods on any negative accounts or accounts with a zero balance.
 4. Calls are made on a monthly basis to try to collect payments.
- The district will establish long-term payment plans for households struggling to pay back a negative balance. Unpaid meal charges may be carried over at the end of the school year as delinquent debt and collection efforts may continue in to the school year.