

Lunch Charge

While it is the district's expectation that student meal accounts are operating in a positive balance, we understand that situations occur and we will work with our students. The district will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances reach a negative balance. It is the parent's responsibility to keep contact information updated so that communication efforts are actually completed.

The district adopts the following procedure to ensure District employees, families and students have a shared understanding of the expectation regarding meal charges. The procedure seeks to allow students to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day and maintain the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.

When a student's school meal account funds are exhausted, a student may charge additional meals to his or her school meal account. No student will be denied the reimbursable meal. Charging a la carte or extra items to a student's account with a negative balance will not be permitted, regardless of the student's eligibility status.

Students who qualify for free meals shall never be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from previous purchases.

The district will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances reach a negative balance. If an account does have a negative balance, communications will be advanced to the family in order to seek payment and to re-establish a positive account balance for the student's use. Families will be notified by the district's automated texting and calling system.

Efforts to collect payment may include use of collection agencies, small claims court, or any other method permitted by law, provided the benefits of potential collections outweigh the costs incurred to achieve those collections.

Students or parents/guardians of students are expected and encouraged to prepay meal costs. Payments for meals may be made by:

1. Bringing payments to the school of enrollment food service department. (please put the student's name and 5-digit number in the memo section)
2. Making payments through the e-funds website listed on the district's website (convenience fee applies)

Notifications

The District will provide a copy of this policy to all households at the start of each school year and to families and students that transfer into the District at the time of transfer. All District staff responsible for enforcing any aspect of the policy shall also receive a copy of the policy. The District may also make this policy available in student handbooks, on the District website or by any other means deemed appropriate.

Records

Records of how and when this policy is communicated to households and staff will be retained.

The district shall also retain documentation of the handling of bad debt, including:

1. Evidence of efforts to collect unpaid meal charges in accordance with this policy;
2. Evidence the collection efforts fell within the timeframe and methods established by this policy;
3. Financial documentation showing when the unpaid meal charges became an operating loss; and
4. Evidence any funds written off as bad debt were restored to the nonprofit school food service account using non-Federal sources.

Charitable Assistance

The District may establish an unpaid meal charges fund to cover the cost of unpaid meal charges. Charitable groups, individuals, school fundraisers, and others may donate to this fund.

All account balances must be paid in full by the end of the school year. Transferring students and seniors checking out need to check with the Food Service Department during the checkout process to assure all debt is taken care of. Positive fund balances may be transferred to a younger sibling, family member or a refund can be issued.

Procedure History:

Promulgated on: 11-19-2018

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