

Meal Charge Policy

*Note: For the purpose of this policy, parent includes guardian, caretaker relative, and any adult responsible for the care of the child.*

The goal of the \_\_\_\_\_ School District is to allow children to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with federal reporting requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances.

The District complies with Federal USDA policies on meal charging and debt collection. All meal charges must be paid directly to the \_\_\_\_\_ School District.

If a student is without meal money, the administration will take action deemed necessary to collect unpaid meal charges while ensuring the nutritional needs of the student are met in providing the student with a regular meal. If financial hardship exists, parents and families will be encouraged to apply for free or reduced price lunches for their child(ren).

**Below are examples that could be incorporated into the district meal charge policy.**

Meal Charges

**Option:** A student is allowed to charge no more than \_\_\_\_\_ meals. After the \_\_\_\_\_ meal is charged, the parent must send money to pay the charges or send meals from home with your child. If there are financial problems, please contact the school and we will implement a payment program. [A la carte items may not be charged.]

**Option:** Students will pay for meals at the district’s published standard rate [each day, weekly, monthly]. A student will be allowed to charge a maximum of \_\_\_\_\_ meals to their account after their balance reaches zero. Once a student has charged those \_\_\_\_\_ meals, he/she will not be allowed to charge a la carte items.

**Option:** Students/Parents pay for meals in advance via [enter website address if applicable] or with a check payable to \_\_\_\_\_. Further details are available on our webpage at [enter web address]. Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a child may be without meal money on any given day. Any remaining funds for a particular student will be carried over to the next school year.

**Option:** If there are no available funds in the student’s account, he/she will be given a breakfast or lunch on account. A notice and/or letter will be sent home with the child requesting payment. A regular meal will be served until the account is balanced or if the student has money in hand for the current meal.

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5 Zero-Balance Prevention  
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7 **Option:** Parents are responsible for meal payment to the food service program. Notices of low or deficit  
8 balances will be sent to parents at regular intervals during the school year.  
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10 **Option:** Parents can track balances themselves online [insert web address], sign up for meal notification  
11 for free, and set up an auto payment low-balance threshold by following the links to the [insert web  
12 address].  
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14 **Option:** Every student may access their meal account at [insert web address].  
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16 **Option:** The student may check with the [cashiers, lunch supervisor] to see the balance of their account  
17 at any time.  
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19 **Refunds** for withdrawn or graduating students. A written request for a refund of any money remaining in  
20 their account must be submitted. An e-mail request is also acceptable. Students who are graduating at the  
21 end of the year will be given the option to transfer to a sibling's account with a written request.  
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23 **Option:** Unclaimed Funds must be requested within one school year. Unclaimed funds will become the  
24 property of the \_\_\_\_\_ School District Food Service Program.  
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26 Uncollected meal debt will be sent to collections per state and/or federal guidelines.  
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28 **The language below is to be used for those school districts who are on the Community Eligibility**  
29 **Provisions (CEP) program.**  
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31 The \_\_\_\_\_ **School/School District** has eliminated the risk for unpaid meal charges by participating  
32 in the Community Eligibility Provisions (CEP) program, which is a meal service option for schools and  
33 school districts operating the school meal programs in high-poverty communities. CEP allows the school  
34 to provide breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled children without the need to collect applications  
35 or establish individual eligibility for a four-year period, thereby increasing access to school meals and  
36 eliminating unpaid meal charges.  
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41 Legal Reference: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/policy>  
42 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, PL 108-265  
43 Child Nutrition Act 1966, 42 United States Code (USC) Section 1771 et seq.  
44 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 United States Code (USC)  
45 Section 794 et seq.  
46 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 United States Code  
47 (USC) Sections 1400-1485  
48 7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 15B, 210 and 220