

534 SCHOOL MEALS POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students receive healthy meals through the school district's Food and Nutrition Program and so school district employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. The policy of the school district is to provide meals to students in a respectful manner and to maintain the dignity of students by prohibiting lunch shaming or otherwise ostracizing the student. The policy seeks to allow students to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day and minimize identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals as well as to maintain the financial integrity of the school Food and Nutrition Program.

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School Meal Accounts are set up on a prepayment basis. Families may add money to School Meal Accounts in a number of convenient ways including: electronic payments, payments mailed to the Food & Nutrition office, and payments delivered to the school office or cafeteria.

- A. Students may pay cash for meals, second meals and a la carte items at any time.
- B. When a School Meals Account does not have a positive balance, a student shall not be allowed to charge a second meal or a la carte items until the account has a positive balance.
- C. If the school district receives school meal aid under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.111, it must make meals available without charge to all participating students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals regardless of account balance.
- D. A student always must be served a reimbursable meal even if the student has an outstanding debt.
- E. Once a meal has been placed on a student's tray or otherwise served to a student, the meal may not be subsequently withdrawn from the student by the cashier or other school official, whether or not the student has an outstanding meals balance.

III. LOW OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES – NOTIFICATION

- A. The school district will make reasonable efforts to notify families of School Meal Account balances via the Parent Portal, US mail, letters sent home, e-mail or phone calls.
- B. Reminders for payment of outstanding student meal balances will not demean or stigmatize any student participating in the school meals program, including, but not limited to, dumping meals, withdrawing a meal that has been served, announcing or listing students' names publicly, or affixing stickers, stamps, or pins.

IV. UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

- A. The school district will make reasonable efforts to communicate with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Where appropriate, families may be encouraged to apply for free and reduced-price meals for their children.
- B. The school district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. Unpaid meal charges are designated as delinquent debt when payment is overdue, the debt is considered collectable, and efforts are being made to collect it.

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- C. School Meals Accounts with negative balances of more than \$500 will be turned over for collection assistance. Collection options may include, but are not limited to, use of collection agencies, claims in the conciliation court, or any other legal method permitted by law.
- D. The school district may not deny any student the opportunity to participate in graduation ceremonies or other commencement activities due to unpaid meal charges.
- E. The school district will not impose any other restriction prohibited under Minnesota Statutes section 123B.37 due to unpaid student meal balances. The school district will not limit a student's participation in any school activities, graduation ceremonies, field trips, athletics, activity clubs, or other extracurricular activities or access to materials, technology, or other items provided to students due to an unpaid student meal balance.

V. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

- A. This policy and any pertinent supporting information shall be provided in writing to:
 - 1. All households at or before the start of each school year;
 - 2. Students and families who transfer into the school district, at the time of enrollment; and
 - 3. All school district personnel who are responsible for enforcing this policy.
- B. The school district will post this policy on the school district's website, or the website of the organization where the meal is served, in addition to providing the required written notification described above.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 123B.37 (Prohibited Fees)
Minn. Stat. § 124D.111 (Lunch Aid; Food Service Accounting)
42 U.S.C. § 1751 et seq. (Healthy and Hunger-Free Kids Act)
7 C.F.R. § 210 et seq. (School Lunch Program Regulations)
7 C.F.R. § 220.8 (School Breakfast Program Regulations)
USDA Policy Memorandum SP 46-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies (2016)
USDA Policy Memorandum SP 47-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments (2016)
USDA Policy Memorandum SP 23-2017, Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q&A

Cross References: None