

## Unpaid Meal Account Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent procedures for students with insufficient funds for school meals and delinquent accounts in the District's School Nutrition Program. Parents and guardians must plan for their child to have sufficient access to food at school on each school day and must actively monitor and manage their child's school food service account. In order to help parents and guardians meet these responsibilities and to ensure that school families are reasonably informed about the food service options that are available to students, the District has established the following guidelines regarding food service charges and student access to food at school.

### I. General Statement on Policy

- A. Students who qualify for free meals will not be denied a reimbursable meal even if they have accrued a negative balance on their cafeteria account.
- B. Students who have money to pay for a reduced-price or full price meal at the time of service will be provided a reimbursable meal, regardless if they currently have a negative balance in their account. If the student intended to use the money for that day's meal, the cashier will not use the money to repay a negative balance or other unpaid meal charge debt unless intended by the parent.
- C. Students without funds to pay for a reduced-price or full price meal are allowed to charge up to \$10.00.
- D. Payments may be made to family meal accounts by bringing a check or cash to their child's school office, by making online payments through Skyward Family Access, or by mailing payments to the District Office c/o Nutrition Services, 405 East Hamlin Street, West Salem, WI 54669

### II. Communicating the Policy

- A. The written meal charge policy notification will be communicated to the households in the District Newsletter prior to the start of school each year. It will be included in the student registration information and to all transfer students during the school year, and by attaching it to the Meal Benefits Application. This policy will also be included on the School Board Policy Website links as well as on the Nutrition Services tab of the website.
- B. School Nutrition Program staff will receive training on the meal charge policy and record of training will be maintained as part of the professional development portfolio.
- C. Documentation of the communication and training plan will be maintained for the Federal Program Administrative Review.

### III. Notifying the Household of Low or Negative Balance in Student Cafeteria Account

- A. The student's household will begin receiving low-balance notification when the account falls below \$10.00 via the automated phone/email messaging system.
- B. The student's household will begin receiving negative-balance notifications when the account falls below -\$0.01 via the automated phone/email messaging system.
  1. Automated phone/email messages will not run on Saturday or Sunday

2. All parents and guardians associated with any child on the account will receive notification.
  - C. The designated Food Service Payor - (One parent or guardian only) may access all meal account status and activity on the parent portal of Skyward Family Access. If parents or guardians do not have access to Family Access they should request their user ID and password from the building secretary.
  - D. Any parents or listed guardians may also contact their child's school or the District Office to inquire about their account.
- IV. Referral to Social Services
- Any and all school district employees are considered to be Mandatory Child Welfare reporters. Parents, guardians, and other caregivers must plan for their children to have adequate access to food and nutrition or the funds available to purchase meals when required. Where a District employee suspects that a responsible adult's actions or inactions may constitute a failure, refusal, or inability to provide necessary care or food for the child that endangers the child's physical health or the child's ability to attend school, the employee may conclude that he/she is required to file a report with or make a referral to an appropriate social services or child protective services agency.
- V. Collection Procedures for Food Service Debts
- Once a student's account has a negative balance, the District will make at least one documented follow-up attempt to collect the debt by providing a person responsible for payment with notice (e.g., by mail, email, telephone, or a similar method) of the amount owed. Payment is due immediately upon notice. These parties may discuss payment plan options. If negative balance persists, then:
- A. Debt on a student food service account is not automatically discharged, forgiven, or reduced at the end of the school year or due to a change in a student's enrollment status (e.g., graduates, transfers, drop outs, etc.).
  - B. To the extent permitted by law, the District may attempt to achieve collection of a food service program debt by referring the debt to a collection service, initiating an action in small claims court, or pursuing other legal action. Costs associated with such actions may be added to the debt that is owed. However, before the District takes any of the steps identified in this paragraph, the District will communicate the intended course of action to a person responsible for payment and provide a final notice of the amount due.
  - C. Non-payment will result in the Interruption of Service. Ala Carte purchases are not allowed to be charged; regardless of building or child grade level. Reimbursable breakfast and lunch meals will continue to be served to students K-8 without service interruption, for a period of no more than 5 consecutive days. Reimbursable meals will only be available to students in 9-12 if they have cash in hand to pay for that days' meal or until payment is made. All notices to families will be copied to the building principal, school guidance counselor, and school social worker and/or school psychologist as deemed necessary.

#### VI. Additional Information and Assistance to Households

For assistance with all issues and questions related to the District's food service program, including eligibility and applications for free or reduced-price meals, student food service accounts, payment methods, the District's online account management system, as well as the specific issues addressed in these procedures, school families can refer to the Nutrition Services Supervisor, or contact the Superintendent's Office, housed at the District Offices; 405 East Hamlin Street, West Salem, WI 54669.