



534 SCHOOL MEALS POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students receive healthy and nutritious meals through the school's nutrition program and that school employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. 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 a la carte items or second meals as well as to maintain the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.

II. PAYMENT OF MEALS

A. Students have use of a meal account. When an account balance falls below \$0.00 a student shall not be allowed to charge second meals or a la carte items until the negative account balance is paid.

B. Parents can participate in the student information system, JMC. JMC is the school's electronic payment system that allows a parent to automatically pay for school fees (e.g. lunch, field trips and participation fees).

C. Each school that participates in the free school meals program must:

(1) participate in the United States Department of Agriculture School Breakfast Program and the United States Department of Agriculture National School Lunch Program; and

(2) provide to all students at no cost up to two federally reimbursable meals per school day, with a maximum of one free breakfast and one free lunch.

D. Once a meal has been placed on a student's tray or otherwise served to a student, the meal may not be subsequently withdrawn from the student by the cashier or other school official, whether or not the student has an outstanding meal balance. Board Policy 534

E. When a student has a negative account balance, the student will not be allowed to charge a snack item.

F. If a parent or guardian chooses to send in one payment that is to be divided between sibling accounts, the parent or guardian must specify how the funds are to be distributed

to the students' accounts. Funds may not be transferred between sibling accounts unless verbal or written permission is received from the parent or guardian.

III. UNPAID OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES – NOTIFICATION

A. The school participates in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program; all enrolled students will receive breakfast and lunch at no charge due to state funding.

B. It is the school's procedure to offer breakfast and/or lunch meals that meet state and federal guidelines.

C. The school will maintain the dignity of students by prohibiting lunch shaming or ostracizing students with unpaid or negative account balances.

D. The school will not withdraw a meal from a student once the meal has been placed on a tray or has otherwise been served regardless of outstanding meals balance.

E. Students eligible for free or reduced-price meals will always be served a meal regardless of unpaid food service accounts.

F. Alternate meals may not be provided to students as a result of school lunch debt. Providing an alternate meal not on the school menu violates Minnesota law (Minn. Stat. 124D.111 subd. 5).

G. The school does not use a collection agency to collect unpaid school meals debt.

H. The school may not enlist assistance of non-school employees, such as volunteers, to engage in debt collection efforts.

I. The school will not impose any other restrictions prohibited under Minn. Stat. 123B.37 due to unpaid student meal balances. The school will not limit a student's participation in any school activities, graduation ceremonies, field trips, athletics, activity clubs, or extracurricular activities or access to materials, technology, or other items provided to students due to an unpaid student meal balance.

J. It is the expectation of the school that all unpaid balances incurred by a student will be paid in full by the parent/guardian by the end of the school year.

IV. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

A. This policy and any pertinent supporting information shall be provided 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 personnel who are responsible for enforcing this policy.

B. The school 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 (School Meals Policies; 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