

Oak Grove School District

Meal Charge Administrative Policy

The Oak Grove School District recognizes that healthy, nutritious meals are an important component to student readiness and ability to learn. Oak Grove School District shall provide nutritious and well-balanced meals in its school meal program. By statute, the district's Child Nutrition Services Department is a self-supporting fund that shall not have a negative balance at the close of a fiscal year.

I. **PURPOSE/POLICY:**

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to insure their child has sufficient funds on their account to cover all school meals and to keep their child's account current.

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the district. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the District and reduce resources available for instructional programs. The goals of this policy are:

- All students are treated with dignity in the serving line.
- All students will receive the same meal regardless of account balance status.
- A consistent process is established regarding charges and collection of charges.
- Student account information are treated with confidentiality by all District staff.

II. **SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:**

Child Nutrition Services Department: Responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the parents/guardians with written documentation of outstanding balances. At the beginning of each school year, all enrolled families receive a free/reduced application. During the final week of September, any student without an application on file will be provided another paper copy of, and/or an electronic link, to an application. Families have access to an application at all times throughout the year and efforts will continue throughout the school year to obtain applications from students who exhibit financial hardships.

School Principals: Responsible for working with Child Nutrition Services Department to obtain free/reduced applications for students exhibiting financial hardships.

Business Office: Responsible for supporting Child Nutrition Services Department in collection of debt and reconciliation of accounts.

Parent/Guardian: Responsible for payment on account.

III. **ADMINISTRATION:**

Students and their parents/guardians shall be notified whenever their account has a low or negative balance. Whenever a student's account has an unpaid balance of \$50 or more, parents/guardians shall be notified in writing that full payment is due upon receipt of notice.

Students with negative balances will be contacted by the Child Nutrition Services Department. This will be done via an automated phone message and then in a written letter, or electronic mail if provided by family.

Graduating eighth graders must pay all charges in full prior to May.

No adults can charge any meals or beverages. All items must be paid in full at time of purchase.

No charges are allowed for student ala carte items such as milk, juice, water. All items must be paid in full at time of purchase.

In cases of repeated nonpayment by a student, the District may contact parents/guardians to discuss the reasons for the nonpayment. The District may evaluate individual circumstances to determine if the student's parents/guardians need assistance completing an application for free or reduced-price meals or need referral to social services.

The District may enter into a repayment plan with a student's parents/guardians for payment of the student's unpaid meal charge balance over a period of time.

The District's efforts to collect debt shall be consistent with district policies and procedures, California Department of Education (CDE) guidance, and 2 CFR 200.426. The district shall not spend more than the actual debt owed in efforts to recover unpaid meal charges. The Superintendent or designee shall maintain records of the efforts made to collect unpaid meal charges and, if applicable, financial documentation showing when the unpaid meal balance has become an operating loss.

IV. METHOD OF PAYMENT:

The Oak Grove School District will accept pre-payment of school meals in the form of cash or check or via the school meal online center. Cash for a daily meal will also be accepted at the register.

Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to register for a meal account on the school district meal online payment center, EZSCHOOLPAY.com, which gives access to:

- View student transaction history
- Request e-mail alerts to low balances
- Make payments and pre-payments to a student's account
- Schedule payments to add funds to a student's account
- Set up automatic deposits to a student's account

There will be a minimal fee for using the online payment center.