

I. PURPOSE

Forest Lake Nutrition Services strives to ensure that all meals are healthy, well balanced and provide students the nutrition they need to succeed at school. Unpaid meal charges place a financial burden on the Nutrition Services Department. 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 meal balances.

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy pertains to regular priced school breakfast and lunch meals. The USDA does not require that a student who pays for regular priced meals be served a meal without payment. Parents/Guardians are responsible for meal payment to the nutrition services program and their assistance is requested in ensuring that each student account maintains a positive balance.

III. PROCEDURES

As students enter their Personal Identification Number (PIN), daily verbal reminders will be shared with students when their balance drops below \$5. Parents will receive weekly phone calls and /or e-mails if their child has a negative account balance. In addition, students at the elementary level will receive low balance notices in their parent folder weekly. Reminders for payment of outstanding student meal balances will not demean or stigmatize any student participating in the school lunch program.

The District will maintain a web access site where parents can make payments, monitor account balances, and request low balance e-mail notifications.

If a student has a negative balance, the student will be offered a reimbursable breakfast or lunch meal with no limitations on the specific type of meal made available. Provision of such a reimbursable meal will continue to take the account into further negative balance. A la carte and concession purchases will not be allowed without sufficient funds in the student's meal account. A meal will not be taken away from a student with an overdrawn account.

If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the administration will investigate the situation more closely and take further action as needed. Further action may include, but is not limited to, creating payment plans, sending an unpaid debt to collections, or initiating legal proceedings to collect unpaid balances. If financial hardship appears to exist, parents and families will be encouraged to apply for free or reduced meal prices, and will be offered assistance with the application procedure.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 124D.111, Subd. 4
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
Minn. Op. Atty. Gen. 169j (May 14, 2019) (*Letter to Ricker*)

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