

MEAL CHARGES IN SCHOOLS

The purpose of these procedures is to establish consistent meal charging and collection procedures districtwide. The District's goals are:

- To maintain a positive experience for students during meal service.
- To treat all students with dignity and respect.
- To establish practices which are age appropriate.
- To minimize meal charges and encourage parents to pre-pay for all meals.
- To promote parents' responsibility for meal payment and self-responsibility of the student.

Meal Accounts: Payment in advance for meals enables the District to achieve these goals. Personal checks and cash deposits are accepted daily at the schools. For convenience, deposits may also be made by credit/debit card through a parent's myDSD account.

Emergency Meal Service: The Board of Education acknowledges that on occasion, students may forget or lose meal money. In such cases, the student's statement of need shall be accepted, and a meal will be made available. School lunch employees shall not, withhold a meal, provide an alternate meal, pull a student from the line, ask the student to call his parent or friend, stamp the student's hand, or otherwise call attention to the student who has forgotten or lost meal money. A school lunch employee may remind a student ***attending a secondary school*** that his account is in the negative. **The cost of the unpaid meal will be charged to the student's account.**

Evaluate Individual Circumstances: When a student repeatedly comes to school without a meal from home or money to participate in the school meal program, school administrators should consider if circumstances in the home warrant contacting social workers or Child Protective Services. Frequent requests may indicate the family's need for free- or reduced-price meals. School administrators may work with the family to apply for school meal benefits. **All meals eaten before a free- or reduced-price meal application is processed and approved are the responsibility of the parent and must be paid for.**

Repayment for Meal Charges and Bad Checks: Federal guidelines prohibit the Food and Nutrition operation from writing off bad debts as a result of charged meals. Every effort will be made to collect for unpaid meals. Unpaid meal charges may result in the following:

- An automated telephone call to the parent.
- An email sent to the parent.
- A verbal reminder to student attending a secondary school.
- School lunch manager contact parents by phone or notes in teacher mailboxes.
- In case of significant delinquent payments, a letter will be sent home from the Food and Nutrition Department.

Parents are responsible to pay all their student's meal charges. All unpaid charges will be added to the list of any outstanding fees or unpaid fines at the end of the school year. Uncollected meal charges shall be handled the same as other school debt.