

536 SCHOOL MEALS POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students receive healthy and nutritious meals through the school district's nutrition program and that school district employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. The policy of the school district is to provide meals to students in a respectful manner and to maintain the dignity of students by prohibiting lunch shaming or otherwise ostracizing the student. 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

Meal payments can be collected in a variety of ways:

- Online through the student's school meals account
 - Payment of cash or check are acceptable at all school offices and the food service office
 - Envelopes are available from the cashier or at the school offices for payment
 - Cash payments at the register/point of sale
 - Information on payment methods are included in the back to school parent information letter, new enrollment packets, and is posted on the District Food Service website
- A. Students have use of a meal account. When the balance reaches zero, a student may charge no more than \$1.50 to this account. When an account reaches this limit, a student shall not be allowed to charge second meals or a la carte items until the negative account balance is paid.
- B. 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.
- C. Once a meal has been placed on a student's tray or otherwise served to a student, the meal may not be subsequently withdrawn from the student by the cashier or other school official, whether or not the student has an outstanding food service balance.
- D. When a student has a negative account balance of \$1.50 or more, the student will not be allowed to charge an a la carte item.
- E. 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 permission is received from the parent or guardian.

III. LOW ACCOUNT BALANCES – NOTIFICATION

- A. The school district will make reasonable efforts to notify families when food service account balances are low.
- B. The automatic online payment system will send an email to parents who use the service to remind them it is time to make a deposit.

IV. NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES ON AND PRIOR TO JUNE 30, 2023 – NOTIFICATION

- A. Personal phone calls and/or emails are made by the Food Service Bookkeeper to notify parents of negative balances.
- B. If negative balances are unable to be cleared during the school year, that balance will be carried over to the next school year. Attempts to clear the balance will re-occur.
- C. The Food Service Bookkeeper will work with households to develop a repayment plan that includes due date expectations while taking into consideration personal household circumstances that may have contributed to a negative balance. If a household fails to complete the re-payment plan, the Chisago Lakes Director of Business Services will be notified and become involved.
- D. Reminders for payment of outstanding student food service balances will not demean or stigmatize any student participating in the school lunch program, including, but not limited to, dumping meals, withdrawing a meal that has been served, announcing or listing students' names publicly, providing alternative meals not specifically related to dietary needs; providing nonreimbursable meals; or affixing stickers, stamps, or pins.

V. UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

- A. The school district will make reasonable efforts to communicate with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges.
- B. The school district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid food service charges classified as delinquent debt. Unpaid food service charges are designated as delinquent debt when payment is overdue, the debt is considered collectable, and efforts are being made to collect it.
- C. The school district may not enlist the assistance of non-school district employees, such as volunteers, to engage in debt collection efforts.
- D. The school district will not impose any other restriction prohibited under Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.37 due to unpaid student food service balances. The school district will not limit a student's participation in any school activities, graduation ceremonies, field trips, athletics, activity clubs, or other extracurricular activities or

access to materials, technology, or other items provided to students due to an unpaid student food service balance.

V. 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 district personnel who are responsible for enforcing this policy.
- B. The school district 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

Cross References: None