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Dr. Patrick Shelton, Superintendent

## **MEAL CHARGE POLICY**

### **I. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the district. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on District finances. The goals of this policy are:

- To treat all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal account balances or meal status.
- To establish a consistent district policy regarding charges and collection of charges.
- To establish policies that are age appropriate.
- To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student.
- To support positive situations with district staff, district business policies, students, and parent/guardian to the maximum extent possible.

### **II. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:**

1. Food Service Department
  - Responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the school district of outstanding balances. The Food Service Department is also responsible for notifying the student's parent/guardian of low or outstanding balances.
2. School District:
  - Responsible for supporting the Food Service Department in collection activities.
3. Parent/Guardian:
  - Responsible for immediate payment.

### **III. POLICY**

1. Free and Reduced Meal Students:
  - a. Students approved for free meals can receive one free reimbursable meal per meal session. Each additional meal will be charged at full price. A la Carte items are not included in the USDA program.
  - b. Students approved for reduced-price meals can receive one reimbursable meal at the reduced-price rate per meal session. A la Carte items are not included in the USDA program.
  - c. The Food Service Department will send notices of deficit balances totaling greater than or equal to 5 meals to parents/guardians at monthly intervals during the school year via email. Students who request a meal will be served one reimbursable meal per meal session regardless of their account balance.
2. All Other Students:
  - a. Students will be served one reimbursable meal at full price per meal session to each student who requests it regardless of the ability to pay for the meal. A la Carte items are not allowed to be charged to a student's account.

3. Charging: Student Meal Accounts
  - a. The Food Service Department will send notices of deficit balances totaling greater than or equal to 5 meals to parents/guardians at monthly intervals during the school year via email.
  - b. A la Carte items are not allowed to be charged to a student's account.
  - c. Any payments made by check that are returned to the district by the bank with notice of "insufficient funds" will incur a penalty fee of \$25.00 by party writing the check
4. Account information:
  - a. The Food Service Department maintains a record of all monies deposited and spent for each student and that record will be made available to the parent upon request. The Food Service Department shall inform parents that meals can be paid for in advance and the balances maintained in their child's account to minimize the possibility that the child may be without meal money on any given day. If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the Food Service Department will investigate the situation more closely, including contacting the parent/guardian to bring money to the school and/or encouraging the parent to apply for free or reduced price meals.
5. Block on Accounts:
  - a. A parent/guardian may contact the Food Service Department and ask to place a block on their child's account to prohibit the purchase of a la carte items and/or set a daily dollar spending amount limit.
  - b. Students who request a meal will be served one reimbursable meal per meal session regardless of their account balance.
6. Adult Meals:
  - a. Adults will be allowed to charge up to a maximum dollar equivalent of five (5) adult meals. Once this account cap has been reached payment must be made before any other charge will be allowed.
7. End of Year:
  - a. All meal charges must be paid off at the end of the school year. Any unpaid charges will be carried forward to the next school year and count towards the student/staff's ability to charge. Money remaining in a student/staff's account will be carried forward to the next school year.

Adopted: February 27, 2023