

# INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF TEXAS CHILD AND NUTRITION DEPARTMENT

## MEAL CHARGE/COURTESY MEAL POLICY

### **Introduction**

The goal of International Leadership of Texas (IL Texas) Child and Nutrition Department (CND) is to provide students with healthy meals each day. Parents may provide their own child with breakfast, lunch, or snacks.

To ensure the health and safety of students with food allergies, intolerances, and special diets, students may not share food from home with other students.

IL Texas CND shall inform families annually of the availability of reimbursable school meals and families must be provided information about applying for free or reduced-price meals. Families participating at the reduced or paid rate are expected to pay for their children's meals. When a child does not have the funds needed to pay for their meal, it is a difficult situation for both the child and the school.

The purpose of this policy is for IL Texas CND to be compliant with federal, state, and local policy, and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances.

As per the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), disabled students and students with free eligibilities cannot be denied a reimbursable meal even if the student has accrued a negative balance.

Any changes to the IL Texas CND's meal charge policy shall be communicated to households as necessary and appropriate at least on an annual basis.

### **Family Notification**

Families must be notified of the Meal Charge Policy in writing annually ahead of the school year and with each new transfer student. The policy will also be posted on the IL Texas website.

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) provide healthy meals for breakfast and lunch to all students, at approved schools, at no charge and eliminates the collection of meal applications and income verification for subsequent school years. Schools that do not qualify for CEP, hereinafter referred to as "non-CEP", will continue the collection of meal applications for free, reduced, and full priced meals. CND shall submit data annually to the state agency to determine if schools continue to qualify for CEP for

subsequent years. CND shall notify households on an annual basis regarding the CEP status for each school.

### **Free and Reduced Meal Applications**

Families of students who attend a non-CEP school are asked to complete a Free and Reduced Meal (Online) application before the beginning of the academic year. The online application is provided to CND by the state agency and is used to determine if students and/or families qualify for free or reduced-priced lunch for the academic year. Families can visit Child and Nutrition website <https://www.iltexas.org/families/child-nutrition> for assistance with applying for free or reduced-price school meals.

### **Transfer Students & 30-Day Carryover**

New students transferring to a non-CEP IL Texas school from a CEP district will receive a carryover eligibility of free for the first 30 operating days of enrollment or until a new eligibility determination is made with the submission of an online application, whichever comes first.

### **New Students**

New students enrolling in a non-CEP IL Texas school who did not transfer from a CEP district, will have a meal status of paid on the first day of school until an online application is submitted by the household and processed by IL Texas CND.

### **Menu Pricing**

Schools that qualify for CEP for the academic school year offer one free breakfast and one free lunch per day to all students. At non-CEP schools, lunch meal charges will be based on eligibility determined using information provided by the household on the online application. For students eligible for free or reduced-price meals, one breakfast and one lunch per day will be provided at the free or reduced rate to the student. Menu pricing is kept up to date on the IL Texas website.

### **Meal Charge Policy**

IL Texas shall allow students to charge the price of their meals to an account unique to the student that may be accessed by the student's parent or legal guardian via the online meal management system. In the event that the funds deposited into the student's account have been fully expended, IL Texas shall provide students a grace period that allows students to incur charges on their account

until they reach the charge limit of \$11.00. Once a student has incurred a negative balance on their account, IL Texas staff shall notify the student's parent or legal guardian that the student's account has been depleted and that a negative balance has been incurred.

### **Courtesy Meals**

International Leadership of Texas Child and Nutrition Department shall provide a courtesy meal for students, including students who do not have money to pay. Courtesy meals are offered at no charge to students with excessive negative meal balances. Any courtesy meal served is a reimbursable meal that conforms to USDA meal requirements. For any student who has a medical statement for a meal accommodation, the courtesy meal served to that student must still meet the required accommodations.

### **Preventing Overt Identification**

In order to reduce the possibility of overt identification, courtesy meals are made available to all students as a menu choice in the serving line and for sale as an A la Carte item during lunch service.

### **Non-Reimbursable Meals**

Whether at a CEP or non-CEP school, if a student takes a non-reimbursable or an incomplete meal, a fee will be charged regardless of student eligibility. Balances incurred for non-reimbursable or incomplete meals are collected by CND.

### **A La Carte Charges**

A la Carte transactions may not be charged on a student account with insufficient funds to cover the purchase. This applies to students at CEP and non-CEP schools. A la Carte items may not be charged on a student account unless written communication has been received from the household by completing the "A La Carte on Account Charges" form. Balances incurred for A la Carte purchases will be collected by IL Texas CND cashier.

### **Payment**

Parents and guardians may make payments to their students account and monitor their child's meal balances by contacting their cafeteria cashier or by logging into the <http://www.myschoolbucks.com/>. If further assistance is needed reach out to Child and Nutrition Department by visiting this website <https://www.iltexas.org/families/child-nutrition>

**End-of-Year Excess Balance**

At the end of the academic school year, families have the option to donate any leftover funds remaining in their student's school lunch account. Families that do not donate will have their full account balance carried over into the next school year or have the option to request a refund. Excess balances for students that graduate will be refunded upon parent request.

**Outstanding Student Debt**

Parents will receive weekly notifications via email, text, or phone when their child(ren) have a negative balance of  $-\$.01$  or more. Campuses print negative balance letters every week and distribute them to the students. Parents also have the ability to setup their own balance notifications through our online payment portal, MySchoolBucks, [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com).

**Adult Meal Charges**

Adult meals may not be charged on an account with insufficient funds to cover the purchase. Adult meals cannot be charged to a student account.

**CND Contact Information**

Child and Nutrition contact information is readily available on the IL Texas website.

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis by CND.

## **Non – Discrimination Statement**

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:

U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

2. fax:

(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

3. email:

Program.Intake@usda.gov

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