

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. Although payment for one breakfast and one lunch per student per day is now paid by State funds, unpaid charges for non-program foods (commonly known as a la carte items) 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 prevention of outstanding food program balances.

II. APPLICABILITY

The USDA does not require that a student who pays for regular priced meals be served a meal without payment. However, the State of Minnesota has provided that students will not be charged for one breakfast and one lunch per student per day. Parents/Guardians are responsible for payment to the nutrition services program for any additional non-program (a la carte) food items a student purchases and their assistance is requested in ensuring that each student account maintains a positive balance. This policy applies to non-program (a la carte) food item purchases.

III. PROCEDURES

A student without sufficient funds in the student's personal account will not be permitted to purchase non-program (a la carte) items. If, due to power outage, connectivity issues, or any other reason, a student is able to complete a purchase of one or more non-program food items, the student's account will be charged when staff are able to complete the transaction. If such charges result in a negative account balance (or a higher negative balance), the District will send communication via email and/or U.S. Mail to the parent / guardian regarding the negative account balance to seek payment for the balance.

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 is without money for non-program items on a consistent basis, the administration may 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 educational benefits for assistance with other fees or costs associated with educational programs, 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*)

APPROVED: 06/22/17
REVISED: 04/02/20
REVISED: 04/06/23
REVISED: 11/02/23