

Staples-Motley School District Policy #704.1 School Meals Policy

I. Philosophy

It is the intent of this policy to establish guidelines to be used by school personnel who are involved in regulating and enforcing advance payment for school lunch services, particularly in the collection of past-due accounts and monitoring of reimbursable meals.

II. Purpose

To comply with Federal and State Food and Nutrition Services, guidelines must be established which address the pre-payment program, inactive food service accounts, and point of service procedures.

III. Guidelines

A. Students are issued an individual, four-digit, identification number. Each time the identification number is used the cost of the meal is deducted from the family's line of credit.

B. The school district does not encourage meal charges. Families are required to maintain a positive family food service balance. The suggested family balance guideline should equal 7 – 10 days of student meals for each family member in school.

C. Site cashiers will try to verbally inform the student when the family balance has dropped below \$.00.

D. **Elementary students** with a negative family food service balance will be allowed to charge four (4) meals. After the fourth charge, a lunch consisting of cold cheese sandwich, apple and milk will be provided. Payment arrangements may be made with the Food Service Director.

Middle school and High school students with a negative family food service balance will be allowed to charge four (4) meals. After the fourth charge, a meal consisting of cold cheese sandwich, apple and milk will be provided. Failure to make payment arrangements with the Food Service Director, or failure to follow the agreed arrangements, will result in the loss of a la carte privileges.

E. A student who has been determined to be eligible for free and reduced price lunch always must be served a reimbursable meal even if the student has an outstanding debt.

F. Once a meal has been placed on a student's tray or otherwise served to a student, the meal may not be subsequently withdrawn from the student by the cashier or other school official, whether or not the student has an outstanding meal balance.

G. Every effort will be made to avoid embarrassment to students.

IV. UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

A. The school district will make reasonable efforts to communicate with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Twice a week families with more than a negative \$10.00 balance will receive an "Auto-call" informing them that their balance has dropped below negative \$10.00.

Where appropriate, families may be encouraged to apply for free and reduced-price meals for their children.

- B. The school district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt by sending out statements in addition to auto calls. Unpaid meal charges are designated as *delinquent debt* when payment is overdue, the debt is considered collectable, and efforts are being made to collect it.
- C. Negative balances of more than -\$10.00 not paid prior to the end of the fiscal school year (July 31), will be turned over to the superintendent or superintendent's designee for collection. Collection options may include, but are not limited to, use of collection agencies, claims in the conciliation court, or any other legal method permitted by law.
- D. The school district may not enlist the assistance of non-school district employees, such as volunteers, to engage in debt collection efforts.

V. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

- A. This policy and any pertinent supporting information shall be provided in writing (i.e., mail, email, back-to-school packet, student handbook, etc.) 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 may post the policy on the school district's website, in addition to providing the required written notification described above.

IV. Credit Balances

Customers having a credit balance of less than \$20.00 on an inactive food service account at the end of a fiscal year will be forfeited.

V. Point of Service

The point of service account remains at the front of the serving line at Staples-Motley Elementary and at the end of the line for all other sites and this food service worker will be responsible for determining if the meal served is reimbursable. The food service worker will notify the cashier daily of any non-reimbursable meals that were served so they can be deducted from the meal account.

The school board encourages good nutritional habits and recognizes the important role the food service department plays on educational programs.

Authority: Food Service Director and Building Principals

Responsibility: Food Service Technician

Collection, when notified: Business Office Manager

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