

**WATERTOWN-MAYER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 111
BOARD OF EDUCATION POLICY**

534 SCHOOL MEALS POLICY

[NOTE: in 2021, the Minnesota legislature amended Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.111 to require that Minnesota school districts that participate in the national school lunch program adopt a school meals policy. In 2023, the Minnesota legislature amended the statute to create the free school meals program]

[NOTE: School districts must follow appropriate debt collection practices when attempting to recover unpaid a la carte items or second meal charges.]

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

- A. School lunch accounts are a prepaid account. Deposits into a student’s lunch account can be made by check, cash or credit/debit card. When paying by check, write your child’s first and last name in the memo blank on the check. Send cash or check payments in an envelope with the family name, student name, and “Lunch Program” printed on the envelope. Credit/debit card payments are made on-line through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal. If you do not know your parent Infinite Campus username, please contact your student’s building secretary. Go to wm.k12.mn.us, click the Infinite Campus button, when logged in, click on the 3 bars in the upper left corner, choose Food Service, click Pay, add money to the appropriate account(s). Negative lunch account balances will prompt an email and telephone call to the student’s home. Payment must be made promptly. All lunch account activity is real time and can be viewed through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal.
- B. All a la carte items or second meal purchases are to be prepaid before meal service begins. See ‘A’ above for directions for depositing lunch account money. A student who does not have sufficient funds will not be allowed to charge a la

carte items or a second meal until additional money is deposited in the student's account.

- C. 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.
- D. 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 meals balance.
- E. When a student has a negative account balance, the student will not be allowed to charge a snack item.
- F. 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 written permission is received from the parent or guardian.

III. LOW OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES – NOTIFICATION

- A. The school district will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low or fall below zero.
- B. Families will be notified of an outstanding negative balance once the negative balance reaches -\$0.01. Families will be notified by an automated calling system and automated email notification.
- C. Reminders for payment of outstanding student meal 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 non reimbursable meals; or affixing stickers, stamps, or pins. A meal will not be taken away from a student with an overdrawn account.

IV. UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

- A. The school district will make reasonable efforts to communicate with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Where appropriate, families may be encouraged to apply for free or reduced-price meals for their children.
- B. The school district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges

classified as delinquent debt. 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 \$20.00, will be turned over to the superintendent or superintendent's designee for collection. In some instances, the school district does use a collection agency to collect unpaid school meal debts after reasonable efforts first have been made by the school district to collect the debt. 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.
- E. The school district will not impose any other restriction prohibited under Minnesota Statutes section 123B.37 due to unpaid student meal 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 meal balance.

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 will post the policy on the school district's website, or on the website of the organization where the meal is served, in addition to providing the required written notification described above.
- C. If the school district contracts with a third party for its meal services, it will provide the vendor with its school meals policy. The school district will ensure that any third-party provider with whom the school district enters into either an original or modified contract after July 1, 2021, adheres to the school district's school meals policy.

Adopted/Revised/Reviewed:

Adopted: August 28, 2017
Revised: April 26, 2021
Revised: November 28, 2022

Revised: July 24, 2023
Reviewed: May 20, 2024

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