

Child Nutrition Account Balance

No adult employees may carry a negative balance in their meal balance account. Adults must prepay.

Parents are responsible to ensure their children have food. Parents are not to carry a negative balance in their children's meal account. Parents may apply for free or reduced meals or work with the Child Nutrition Department to pay off debt. Parents who wish to eat a school meal with their child(ren) must prepay in the office.

All families new to BPS will be given the opportunity to complete a meal application for reduced-price meals.

Students will receive a menu-reimbursable meal, regardless of account balance. A la carte items may be purchased only when the account has a positive balance; there is no charging of a la carte. If a la carte items are charged, it is the parent's responsibility to pay for these items.

Parents are responsible for monitoring their children's meal accounts and ensuring a credit balance. The District makes efforts to assist parents with their responsibility. The following protocol will be used:

1. Negative Balance Notification (three weeks of indebtedness): Parents will receive a text and email message on Tuesdays and Fridays.
2. Robo-Call Negative Balance Notification (-\$30 to -\$100): An automated message from the Child Nutrition Program Director will be sent Tuesdays and Fridays. The message shall include potential collection agency action.
3. Collection Agency (-\$100 or greater): Collections will be handled by the Child Nutrition Department two times per year.
4. Staff Intervention: Along with the automated notifications, a school may call or send a negative student balance letter to families to inform them of their low/negative balance. Negative letters may be emailed or mailed. Households may be requested to meet with a school official, such as the principal, social worker, or counselor for resolution.

As permitted by USDA, principals may certify families for free meals. However, if a household member applied for meal benefits and was denied based on income, a principal cannot certify the student(s) for free meals per USDA regulations.

All notifications will include the following: "Free or reduced meal applications are available at your school or by contacting Child Nutrition at 701-323-4090. BPS wants to work out a payment plan, which necessitates parents contact Child Nutrition at 701-323-4090."

Families of returning students will see positive meal balances rolled forward into their child's/ren's meal account(s) for the next year. Families who have no students returning (last sibling to graduate, family leaves BPS) will receive a refund of the remaining balance in their meal account if requested unless they wish to donate the funds. Requests for refunds must be received by June 10 of the recently completed school year or within two weeks of the student(s) leaving the District, whichever comes first. Any money left in inactive accounts will be donated to help families with negative balances in their meal accounts.

End of Bismarck Public School District Policy ABEC

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