

## SCHOOL MEAL CHARGE POLICY

### Definition

- *Alternate meal* means any meal that is different from the day's advertised reimbursable meal, e.g., a peanut butter or cheese sandwich, plus milk. The cost of this meal may not come from the food service account. The charge for an alternate meal shall be the current meal price.

### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent district practices for the provision of meals to students who have insufficient funds in their school meal accounts and the collection of unpaid meal debt.

### Adults

Adults are prohibited from charging meals.

### Dissemination

The Superintendent must ensure that uniform meal account policy is provided in writing, to all parents of students at the start of each school year and to the parents of students transferring to the school mid-year. The Superintendent shall also provide the policy to all school and district-level staff members responsible for the enforcement of this regulation.

The District may use additional methods to disseminate the policy on an ongoing basis throughout the school year.

### Payment Options

Parents are responsible to ensure that students have sufficient funds to purchase school meals each day or pre-pay for meals, to avoid accruing meal charges. District payment options for student meal accounts include in person and online payment.

### Charging Procedure

In the event a student has insufficient funds in their meal account, the District shall allow the student to charge up to five reimbursable meals, the cost of which must be deducted from the student's meal account. After the student has exceeded the number of allowable reimbursable meal charges, the District shall discreetly provide the student with an alternate meal, the cost of which shall also be deducted from the student's meal account.

A student with a negative meal balance is prohibited from charging a la carte or extra items (e.g., a second milk or additional entrée.)

Administration may prohibit participation by the student in any future fee-based programs until the negative meal account is paid in full.

### Payment Reminders

Whenever a student incurs a charge or the District serves the student an alternate meal, district personnel shall notify the parents of the student by letter, phone, text, etc. If a pattern of charging continues, administration shall attempt to contact the student's parents and encourage the parent to complete a free or reduced meal application.

**REQUIRED**

Descriptor Code: ABEC

Nothing in this procedure prohibits school district personnel from reporting suspected abuse or neglect of a student as required by law.

**Unpaid Meal Charges**

Parents are expected to pay all charges within 30 days. If they fail to do so, the District may rollover debt or refer the debt to collections. The District may use an alternative funding source (e.g., nonfederal funding or charitable funding source) to offset costs incurred from unpaid meal charges and collection fees.

**Balance**

Students returning to school in the District shall see a positive meal balance rolled forward into their meal account for the next year. Students that graduate or withdraw from the District may receive a refund of the remaining balance in their meal account within 10 workdays of completion or departure unless they wish to donate the funds.

A written request for a refund of monies remaining in an enrolled student’s meal account at the end of the school year must be submitted to the district office by June 1st. A student who is graduating shall be given the option to transfer meal funds to a sibling’s account. Any money left in an inactive account may be donated to help struggling students with insufficient funds in their meal accounts.

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Complementary Documents

- ABEC-AR, Adult Meals

**End of Maple Valley School District #4 Policy ABEC..... Adopted: 10/11/21**