VASD School Nutrition Meal Charge Policy

This policy outlines procedures for situations when students do not have sufficient funds to pay for meals at the time of service. Its purpose is to ensure clarity and consistent understanding among food service staff, school administrators, families and students have a common understanding of expectations in these situations.

Low Balance Notifications

Email notifications will be sent when a student account falls to $10 or less for all students. These are sent on every Sunday & Wednesday evening. The frequency of notifications will increase when an account becomes negative. Students with ala carte permission will not be able to purchase ala carte items once their account balance is less than $0.

Negative Balance Procedures

When a paying family account reaches -$25 or more, a letter will be mailed via postal service, along with a free & reduced meal application form on Monday mornings. Payment is expected by the end of the week. These letters are sent weekly with outstanding balances. If a middle or high school student's account reaches -$100 and payments have not been received, a different letter will be mailed notifying the family the student's meal account will be deactivated unless payment is made.
If the negative balance remains unserviced, the District will pursue collection. Remedies may include, but are not limited to:

- Referral to a third-party collection agency, with allowable costs and fees added to your balance
- Filing a small claims action to obtain a judgment for the unpaid balance, plus permissible court costs and attorney fees
- Any other lawful remedies available to the District

Payment Options & Assistance

Parents are informed of available options, including setting up a payment plan, paying cash for the day's meal or bringing a meal from home. If the parents agree to a payment plan in place, they may also be offered a meal fund grant to assist with paying down the balance more quickly.

Account Deactivation

Meal accounts for middle & high school students are deactivated every Tuesday morning if unpaid. Deactivation means that staff will record the student's id and name manually; their accounts cannot be accessed electronically. The student's tray will not be removed at the time of service. Breakfast participation for these students will remain active for these students to support a healthy start of their day. Elementary school students' accounts are never deactivated regardless of the amount owed.

Non-Discrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax:
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email:
Program.Intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.