October 2025

School Meals Procedure

I. Purpose

Mounds View Public Schools participates in the Minnesota Free School Meals program as outlined in Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 124D.111, subdivision 1. In addition, this procedure is to ensure that school district employees, families and students have an understanding of the expectations regarding school meals, and unpaid nutrition account charges.

II. General Statement of Procedure

A. Mounds View Schools' goal is to provide high-quality, nutritious, well-balanced meals for students. Nutrition Services offers a wide variety of food choices to teach students how to develop healthy, lifetime eating habits, and enhance learning, as well as maintain the financial integrity of the National School Breakfast and Lunch program and eliminate stigmatization of children who are unable to pay nutrition account charges.

B. The responsibility for ensuring that students can participate in meal service is that of the parents or guardians. The responsibility of the district is ensuring that students have a school meals program available to them.

III. Meal Service

A. Mounds View Public Schools will offer all enrolled students, Preschool to Grade 12, one breakfast and one lunch at no cost each day at school due to the Minnesota Free School Meals program regardless of an outstanding account balance or Educational Benefits eligibility status.

   a. Once staff have placed a reimbursable meal on a tray or otherwise served the reimbursable meal to a student, the reimbursable meal may not be subsequently withdrawn from the student by the cashier or other school official.

      i. All reimbursable Breakfast and Lunch meals offered meet state and federal guidelines

      ii. Alternate meals may not be provided to students as a result of a student's account status. Providing an alternate meal not on the scheduled menu violates a Minnesota law (Minn. Stat. § 124D.111) that requires respectful treatment of students regarding school lunch debt.

   b. Students must select a complete reimbursable meal following offer vs. serve meal requirements for their meal to be a reimbursable no cost ($0.00) meal.

Point of Service Meal Counts

A. For Mounds View Public Schools to receive State and Federal reimbursement for meals served, each student must be identified at the point of service.

a. To identify students receiving a reimbursable meal, the student will enter their 5 digit PIN into the keypad at the register as they receive their meal

    i. Alternative option for a Point of Service meal count is a trained staff member checks off the student's name on a classroom list when the student receives their meal for Nutrition Services to record.

B. All students will be treated respectfully and in accordance with Minnesota Statute 2024, section 124D.111, subdivision 5.

Nonprogram Food Sales

A. Nonprogram Food Sales are any food or beverage sold outside of the reimbursable meal.
    a. Mounds View Public School provides an opportunity for Middle and High School students (Grades 6 to 12) to purchase ala carte food and beverages in addition to the reimbursable meal(s).

    b. Mounds View Public School provides an opportunity for all students (Kindergarten to Grade 12) to purchase a second student meal and ala carte milk in addition to the reimbursable meal(s).

    c. Students who choose to purchase a carton of milk or a second entrée without funds in their nutrition account will be charged. Mounds View Nutrition Services staff will not remove any second entrée from a student's reimbursable meal tray, or prohibit a student from purchasing milk.

    d. Students who have negative account balances will not be allowed to charge ala carte items, such as bottle beverages, snacks etc., until the student has sufficient funds in their nutrition account.

IV. Notification of Account Status

A. Mounds View Schools utilizes several methods to notify households of negative nutrition account balances. <u>The following communications will be focused on parents rather than the students.</u>

    a. Families can set up low balance email alerts and automated payments when their child's nutrition account balance reaches a certain amount via LINQ Connect (linqconnect.com)

    b. Mounds View Schools will send a weekly automated email to the parent/guardian when their secondary students nutrition account balance reaches -$0.01 due to ala carte item(s) being charged to the students nutrition account.

    c. School Administration

        i. It is important to recognize that everyone involved in the discussion at this level has the best interest of students in mind and that each family situation is unique.

ii. The School Administrative team will work together to develop a solution to unpaid school nutrition accounts. A team approach is critical to identifying the scope of the debt as well as identifying ways to address the debt in a long-term, sustainable manner.

V. Collection of Unpaid Nutrition Account Debt

A. The school district will make reasonable efforts to communicate with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges

B. The school district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid nutrition account charges classified as delinquent.

C. Once an unpaid nutrition account balance is determined to be uncollectible, Mounds View Public Schools Nutrition Services does not use a collections agency to collect the funds.

VI. Donations and account refunds

A. If a student is graduating or moving out of the District, families should complete a "Nutrition Account Request Form" if a positive balance remains in their student's account. Families may choose to refund the money, transfer to a sibling or donate to the Nutrition Services Angel Fund.

B. The Nutrition Account Request Form may be found on the Nutrition Services webpage at www.mvpschools.org/services/nutrition

C. In addition to donations made on the "Nutrition Account Request Form", donations are accepted year-round. Contributions can be made at any school. Funds will be deposited into the school Angel Fund. The Angel Fund is a fund designated for students experiencing financial hardship, or a need is presented to use Angel Fund money to clear a student's negative account balance.

   a. The decision to use Angel Fund money for student meal accounts is determined by the Nutrition Services District Manager and the Nutrition Services Supervisor. Angel Fund donation money is used only to support nutrition related costs for students.

VII. Accountability

A. This procedure will be distributed to households annually via the online annual update and the Nutrition Services website.

B. This procedure will be distributed annually to school and district level staff responsible for enforcement such as nutrition services, principals and their designees, and other district administrators as appropriate.

C. Schools may choose to share information about the policy with families in other communication such as student handbooks, newsletters and/or in online portals.

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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

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