

MEAL CHARGING AND PROHIBITION AGAINST MEAL SHAMING

[Districts participating in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program must adopt a policy addressing meal charging and prohibiting meal shaming. The policy is not needed where there is district-wide participation in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or Provision 2, but is needed if only some, but not all schools within a district participate in CEP or Provision 2.]

It is the District's goal to provide students with access to nutritious no- or low-cost meals each school day and to ensure that a student whose parent/guardian has unpaid meal charges is not shamed or treated differently than a student whose parent/guardian does not have unpaid meal charges.

Unpaid meal charges place a large financial burden on the District. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with federal requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances to ensure that the student is not stigmatized, distressed, or embarrassed.

The intent of this policy is to establish procedures to address unpaid meal charges throughout the District in a way that does not stigmatize, distress, or embarrass students. The provisions of this policy pertain to regular priced reimbursable school breakfast, lunch and snack meals only. Charging of items outside of the reimbursable meals (a la carte items, adult meals, etc.) is expressly prohibited.

Access to Meals

- a. Free meal benefit eligible students will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch meal of their choice each day. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.
- b. Reduced meal benefit eligible students will be allowed to receive a breakfast of their choice for *[enter amount, maximum \$.25] and lunch of their choice for *[enter amount, maximum \$.25] each day. A student will be allowed to charge a maximum of *[enter number] meals to their account after the balance reaches zero. The charge meals offered to students will be reimbursable meals available to all students, unless the student's parent or guardian has specifically provided written permission to the District to withhold a meal. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.
- c. Full pay students will pay for meals at the District's published paid meal rate each day. A student will be allowed to charge a maximum of *[enter number] meals to their account after the balance reaches zero. The charge meals offered to students will be reimbursable meals available to all students, unless the student's parent or guardian has specifically provided written permission to the District to withhold a meal. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.

Ongoing Staff Training

- a. Staff will be trained annually and throughout the year as needed on the procedures for managing meal charges using the State Education Department (SED) Webinar or the District's training program.
- b. Staff training will include ongoing eligibility certification for free or reduced price meals.

Parent Notification

- a. Parents/guardians will be notified that a student's meal card or account balance is exhausted within *[enter number] days and then every *[enter number] days/weeks thereafter.
- b. Parents/guardians will be notified that a student has accrued unpaid meal charges within *[enter number] days of the charge and then every *[enter number] days/weeks thereafter.

Parent Outreach

- a. Staff will communicate with parents/guardians with five or more unpaid meal charges to determine eligibility for free or reduced price meals.