

Adopted: _____ MSBA/MASA Model Policy
534

Revised: _____ Orig. 2017
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534 SCHOOL MEALS POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students receive healthy and nutritious meals through the school district's nutrition program and that school district employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. -The policy of the school district is to provide meals to students in a respectful manner and to maintain the dignity of students by prohibiting lunch shaming or otherwise ostracizing the student. The policy seeks to allow students to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day and minimize identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for a la carte items or second meals as well as to maintain the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.

II. PAYMENT OF MEALS

~~[NOTE: Payment systems and procedures will likely vary from to school district. The school district should select one of the following options and delete the remaining options.]~~

~~A. Families may submit payment via cash or check at any school office or the Education Services Center, or utilize our online payment system through Family Access via debit/credit card or checking account. Food Service staff are able to accept payments over the phone at the Education Services Center, and can be reached at 763-689-6210. [OPTION 1: All a la carte items or second meal purchases are to be prepaid before meal service begins. [Insert description for how families may add money to students' accounts (e.g., electronic payment options, pay at the school office, etc.).] A student who does not have sufficient funds will not be allowed to charge a la carte items or a second meal until additional money is deposited in the student's account.]~~

~~[OPTION 2: Students have use of a meal account. When the balance reaches zero, a student may charge no more than \$[insert amount] or [insert number of meals] to this account]. When an account reaches this limit, a student shall not be allowed to charge second meals or a la carte items until the negative account balance is paid. [Insert description for how families may add money to students' accounts (e.g., electronic payment options, pay at the school office, etc.).]~~

~~[OPTION 3: Insert a school district-specific process for payment of a la carte items or second meals.]~~

B. Free School Meals Program

1. The free school meals program is created within the Minnesota Department of Education

~~A.~~ 2. Each school that participates in the United States Department of Agriculture National School Lunch program and has an Identified Student Percentage below the federal percentage determined for all meals to be reimbursed at the free rate via the Community Eligibility Provision must participate in the free school meals program.

~~B.~~ A3. If the school district Each school that participates in the United States Department of Agriculture National School Lunch program and has an Identified Student Percentage at or above the federal percentage determined for all meals to be reimbursed at the free rate must participate in the federal Community Eligibility Provision in order to participate in the free school meals program.

~~C.~~ 4. Each school that participates in the free school meals program must:

~~(1)~~ a. participate in the United States Department of Agriculture School Breakfast Program and the United States Department of Agriculture National School Lunch Program; and

~~(2)~~ b. provide to all students at no cost up to two federally reimbursable meals per school day, with a maximum of one free breakfast and one free lunch.

~~D. Families may submit payment via cash or check at any school office or the Education Services Center, or utilize our online payment system through Family Access via debit/credit card or checking account. Food Service staff are able to accept payments over the phone at the Education Services Center, and can be reached at 763-689-6210.~~

~~E. If the school district receives school lunch aid under Minnesota Statutes section 124D.111, it must make lunch available without charge to all participating students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals regardless of account balance.~~

~~F. A student with an outstanding meal charge debt will be allowed to purchase a meal if the student pays for the meal when it is received.~~

- ~~G.~~ A student who has been determined ~~to be~~ eligible for free and reduced-price ~~lunch~~ meals must always ~~must~~ be served a reimbursable meal even if the student has an outstanding debt.

~~H~~[NOTE: While subparagraph 3. above is inherent given subparagraph 2., MSBA recommends that school boards consider including subparagraph 3., which is stated in Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.111.]

- C. Once a meal has been placed on a student's tray or otherwise served to a student, the meal may not be subsequently withdrawn from the student by the cashier or other school official, whether or not the student has an outstanding meals balance.
- D. When a student has a negative account balance, the student will not be allowed to charge a la carte ~~snack~~ item.
- E. ~~If a parent or second entree guardian chooses to send in one payment that is to be divided between sibling accounts, the parent or guardian must specify how the funds are to be distributed to the students' accounts. Funds may not be transferred between sibling accounts unless written permission is received from the parent or guardian.~~
- F. A student may purchase a second breakfast or second lunch at the nonprogram price if the student has already selected a reimbursable breakfast.
- G~~J.~~ ~~Parents or guardians make payments to one account that is shared between all sibling accounts.~~
- ~~A student may purchase a second lunch at the nonprogram price if the student has already selected a reimbursable lunch.~~

[NOTE: New paragraphs F and G apply if a school district receives school breakfast aid under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.111 or school lunch aid under Minnesota Statutes, section 124D.111 respectively.]

III. LOW OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES – NOTIFICATION

- A. ~~A.~~ The school district will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low or fall below zero.
- B. ~~B.~~ Families will be notified of ~~their~~ an outstanding negative balance once ~~it is less than \$10~~ the negative balance reaches \$10 ~~the negative balance reaches \$10~~ [insert amount] or [insert number of meals]. Families will be notified of outstanding negative balance. by [insert the method used to notify families (e.g., automated emails and text messages, calling system, email, letters sent home)].
- C. ~~C.~~ Reminders for payment of outstanding student meal balances will not demean or stigmatize any student participating in the school lunch program,

including, but not limited to, dumping meals, withdrawing a meal that has been served, announcing or listing students' names publicly, providing alternative meals not specifically related to dietary needs; providing nonreimbursable meals; or affixing stickers, stamps, or pins.

IV. UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

~~B.~~ A. The school district will make reasonable efforts to communicate with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Where appropriate, families may be encouraged to apply for free or reduced-price meals for their children.

~~C.B.~~ Families may apply for free/reduced meals anytime during the school year. Applications are mailed to all families in the school district prior to the school year. In addition, applications are available at the district office, all school offices and on the district's website under Food Service.

~~C~~ B. The school district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. Unpaid meal charges are designated as delinquent debt when payment is overdue, the debt is considered collectable, and efforts are being made to collect it.

~~DC.~~ Negative balances of more than \$50, ~~insert amount~~, not paid prior to the end of the school year ~~enter time period (e.g., end of the month, end of the semester, end of the school year)~~, will be turned over to the superintendent or superintendent's designee for collection. In some instances, the school district does use a collection agency to collect unpaid school meal debts after reasonable efforts first have been made by the school district to collect the debt. Collection options may include, but are not limited to, use of collection agencies, claims in the conciliation court, or any other legal method permitted by law.

~~ED.~~ The school district may not enlist the assistance of non-school district employees, such as volunteers, to engage in debt collection efforts.

~~FE.~~ The school district will not impose any other restriction prohibited under Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.37 due to unpaid student meal balances. The school district will not limit a student's participation in any school activities, graduation ceremonies, field trips, athletics, activity clubs, or other extracurricular activities or access to materials, technology, or other items provided to students due to an unpaid student meal balance.

~~[NOTE: School districts that use a collection agency to collect unpaid school meals debt must address this in this policy. A new paragraph F. can be added to address the use of a collection agency.]~~

V. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

- A. This policy and any pertinent supporting information shall be provided in writing (i.e., mail, email, back-to-school packet, student handbook, etc.) to:
1. all households at or before the start of each school year;
 2. students and families who transfer into the school district, at the time of enrollment; and
 3. all school district personnel who are responsible for enforcing this policy.

~~D.C.~~ The school district will post this policy on the school district's website, or the website of the organization where the meal is served, in addition to providing the required written notification described above.

~~E. If the school district contracts with a third party for its meal services, it will provide the vendor with its school meals policy. The school district will ensure that any third party provider with whom the school district enters into either an original or modified contract after July 1, 2021, adheres to the school district's school meals policy.~~

Source: Cambridge-Isanti Schools

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 123B.37 (Prohibited Fees)
Minn. Stat. § 124D.111 (School Meals Policies; Lunch Aid; Food Service Accounting)
42 U.S.C. § 1751 *et seq.* (Healthy and Hunger-Free Kids Act)
7 C.F.R. § 210 *et seq.* (School Lunch Program Regulations)
7 C.F.R. § 220.8 (School Breakfast Program Regulations)
USDA Policy Memorandum SP 46-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies (2016)
USDA Policy Memorandum SP 47-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments (2016)
USDA Policy Memorandum SP 23-2017, Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q&A

Cross References: ~~None~~

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