



Revised: XXXXX7/8/24, 12/09/21, 2/27/20; 5/23/19

Adopted: 7/13/17 (MSBA Policy Review)

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

- A. All a la carte or second meal purchase are to be prepaid before meal service begins. Funds may be deposited into student meal accounts via school café, cash or check. A student who does not have sufficient funds will not be allowed to charge a la carte items or a second meal
- B. All of our schools participate in the Minnesota ~~N~~ Free Schools Meal Program.
- C. Each school that participates in the Free School Meal program must:
 1. participate in the United States Department of National Agriculture School LunchBreakfast Program; and USDA Breakfast Program.
 2. 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D. Once a meal has been placed on a student's tray or otherwise served to the student, the meal may not be subsequently withdrawn from the student by the cashier or other school official, whether or not the student has an outstanding balance.
- E. When a student has a negative account balance, the student will not be allowed to charge any a la carte items. ~~sneak item. k.~~
- F. If a parent or 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 permission is received from the parent or guardian.

III. LOW OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES – NOTIFICATION

- A. The school district will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low or fall below zero.
- B. Families will be notified of an outstanding negative balance by automated calling ~~and, email, letter and/or phone call~~ to the household
- C. Reminders for payment of outstanding student meal balances will not demean or stigmatize any student participating in the school lunch program ~~,including, but no 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

- 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.
- 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.
- C. 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.
- D. Other than collection agencies, the school district may not enlist the assistance of non-school district employees, volunteers, to engage in debt collection efforts.
- E. 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.

F. A student may purchase a second breakfast at the nonprogram price if the student has already selected a reimbursable breakfast.

G. A student may purchase a second lunch at the nonprogram price if the student has already selected a reimbursable lunch.

V. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

- A. This policy and 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 district, at the time of enrollment; and
 - 3. all school district personnel who are responsible for enforcing this policy.
- B. 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.
- C. If the school district contracts with a third party for its meals 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.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 123B.37 (Prohibited Fees)
Minn. Stat. § 124D.111, (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