

McCall-Donnelly School District No. 421

Non-Instructional Operations

8210

Food Services

~~McCall-Donnelly Jt. School District
Policy 8210- Non-Instructional Operations
FOOD SERVICES~~

The district adopts this policy to ensure that school food service professionals, school administrators, families and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding school meal charges. The purpose of this policy is to allow students to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day, minimize identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals, and maintain the financial integrity of the nonprofit school food service program. The district will meet the meal price guidelines for students and adults as required by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs. It is the policy of the district that all student meals be paid for in advance to efficiently and accurately account for all meals served in the food service program. The following guidelines are established for the purpose of maintaining efficient food service operations.

This policy applies to all students within the district who utilize the school meal program, whether they are eligible for free, reduced-price, or full-price meals. This policy ensures that all students have access to nutritious meals, while also promoting responsible use of meal account funds by families.

MEAL ACCOUNTS

Each student has a personal meal account that can be used to pay for meals in the cafeteria. Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their child's account maintains a positive balance. The district expects families to monitor and maintain their child's meal account balance to avoid negative balances.

STUDENT MEALS

When a student's school meal account funds are exhausted, a student paying the full or reduced price for meals is limited to charging \$20. Students may charge breakfast and lunch up to the maximum amount. After \$20 in meals has been charged, the student will not be allowed to charge further meals until the negative account balance has been paid in full. However, the student will be allowed to purchase a meal if the student

pays for the meal when it is received. Students who qualify for free meals will never be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from previous purchases. Students unable to purchase a meal following these processes will be served an alternative meal until such time as account is reconciled.

ACCOUNT BALANCES

The district will set up automatic balance notifications to the parent/guardian once a month, once a low balance of \$20 is reached and when the account drops in the negative. The parent/guardian will be notified of low and negative account balances and the need to add money to their child(ren)'s account(s) to maintain a positive account balance for the student's use. At least one written warning will be provided to a student and his or her parents/guardians prior to denying meals for exceeding the district's charge limit. Families will be notified of negative balances by automated calling system, and/or some combination of the following: a letter sent home with the student, email, a phone call, or text message. However, it is the responsibility of the parents and guardians to monitor the student's meal account to maintain a positive balance.

If a parent/guardian disagrees with any transactions on a student's account, contesting those charges must be done within 30 days of the charge by contacting the food service director in writing.

Notices of negative balances may include a copy or description of this policy and information regarding how to apply for free or reduced-price meals, including contact information for the district staff member or designee, who can help them with the application process. Active efforts to encourage eligible households to apply for free or reduced-price meals may be used to prevent meal charges.

Account balances may be checked at any time by accessing MySchoolBucks with appropriate login information.

Graduating seniors must have their accounts paid in full by Senior Checkout to participate in their class's graduation ceremony. All other account balances must be paid in full by the last day of school. Any unpaid balances as of June 30th each year will be subject to collection activity.

Students who are graduating at the end of the year will be given a refund of their balance. Funds can be transferred to a sibling's account with a written request from the parent/guardian. The district will attempt to contact families of students who withdraw from the district to return any funds

remaining in the student's account. Households approved for free or reduced-price meal benefits are entitled to a refund of any funds remaining in their accounts under federal law.

COLLECTION OF DELINQUENT ACCOUNTS

If payment of a negative balance is not received within 10 school days of the maximum charge limit being attained, the debt will be turned over to the superintendent or designee for collection. Unpaid meal charges may be carried over at the end of the school year as delinquent debt and collection efforts may continue into the new school year. If the debt is not paid within 30 school days of mailing the final notice of the negative account balance, it shall be considered bad debt for purposes of federal law concerning unpaid meal charges. Such bad debt must be restored using non-federal funds, from sources such as the district's general fund, special funding from state or local governments, or other sources.

NOTICE

The district will provide a copy of this policy during online registration in the student information system (i.e., PowerSchool). All district staff responsible for enforcing any aspect of this policy will also receive a copy and are expected to be familiar with the guidelines set forth herein. This policy may also be communicated to school social workers, school nurses, the homeless liaison, or other staff members who may assist students in need. The district may also make this policy available in student handbooks, the district's website, or by other means as deemed appropriate.

RECORDS

In accordance with federal law, records of how and when this policy is communicated to households and staff will be retained. The district will also retain documentation of the handling of bad debt, including:

1. Evidence of efforts to collect unpaid meal charges in accordance with this policy.
2. Evidence the collection efforts fell within the timeframe and methods established by this policy.
3. Financial documentation showing when the unpaid meal charge(s) became an operating loss; and
4. Evidence any funds written off as bad debt were otherwise restored to the non-profit school food service account using non-federal resources.

CHARITABLE ASSISTANCE

The district may establish an unpaid meal charge fund to recover the cost of unpaid meal charges.

Charitable groups, individuals, school fundraisers, and others may donate to this fund. Parents or guardians of students who pay the full amount for school meals and who have funds left over in their school meals account at the end of the year may be offered the option of donating these funds to the unpaid meal charges fund. If the district chooses to establish an unpaid meal charges fund, the superintendent or designee may establish procedures for the use of such funds.

LEGAL CROSS REFERENCES

[SP 23-2017 – Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q & A \(USDA\)](#)

[SP 46-2016 – Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies \(USDA\)](#)

[7 C.F.R. Part 210 – National School Lunch Program](#)

[42 U.S.C. §§1751 et seq. – National School Lunch Act](#)

[33-603 – Payment of Fees or Returning of Property](#)

[33-512 – Governance of Schools](#)

Policy History

Adopted: