

Meal Charge Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent procedures for students with insufficient funds for school meals and delinquent accounts in the District's School Nutrition Program. Parents and guardians must plan for their child to have sufficient access to food at school on each school day and must actively monitor and manage their child's school food service account. In order to help parents and guardians meet these responsibilities and to ensure that school families are reasonably informed about the food service operation that are available to students, the District has established the following guidelines regarding food service charges and student access to food at school.

1. General Statement on Policy

- a. Students who qualify for free meals will not be denied a reimbursable meal even if they have accrued a negative balance on their cafeteria account.
- b. Students who have money to pay for a reduced-price or full price meal at the time of service will be provided a meal, regardless if they currently have a negative balance in their account if the student intended to use the money for that day's meal, the cashier will not use the money to repay a negative balance or other unpaid meal charge debt.
- c. Students without funds to pay for a reduced-price or full price meal are allowed to charge up to \$10.00
- d. Students who charge a meal will receive a reimbursable meal.
- e. Payments may be made to family meal accounts by bringing a check or cash to their child's school office or by making online payments through Skyward Family Access.

2. Communicating the Policy

- a. The written meal charge policy will be communicated to the household by the automated phone system prior to the start of school each year. It will be included in the student information packet distributed on the first day of school and to all transfer students during the school year, and by attaching it to the Meal Benefits Application.
- b. School Nutrition Program staff will receive training on the meal charge policy and record of training will be maintained as part of the professional development portfolio.

- c. Documentation of the communication and training plan will be maintained for the Federal Program Administrative Review.

3. Notifying the Household of Low or Negative Balance in Student Cafeteria Account

- a. The student's household will begin receiving notification when the account falls below \$10.00 via the automated phone/email messaging system.
- b. Parents or guardians may access all meal account status and activity on the parent portal of Skyward Family Access. If parents or guardians do not have access to Family Access they should request their user id and password from the building secretary.
- c. Parents and guardians may also contact their child's school or the District Office to inquire about their account.

4. Referral to Social Services

Parents, guardians, and other caregivers must plan for their children to have adequate access to food and nutrition. Where a District employee suspects that a responsible adult's actions or inactions may constitute a failure, refusal, or inability to provide necessary care or food for the child that endangers the child's physical health or the child's ability to attend school, the employee may conclude that he/she is required to file a report with or make a referral to an appropriate social services agency.

5. Collection Procedures for Food Service Debts

Once a student's account has a negative balance, the District will make at least one documented follow-up attempt to collect the debt by providing a person responsible for payment with notice (e.g., by mail, email, telephone, or a similar method) of the amount owed. Payment is due immediately upon notice. If these attempts are not successful, a school official will attempt to make a person-to-person telephone contact or schedule an in-person meeting with a person responsible for payment. These parties may discuss payment plan options. If negative balance still has not been paid after the previous steps:

- a. Debt in a student food service account is not automatically discharged, forgiven, or reduced at the end of the school year or due to a change in a student's enrollment status. (e.g., graduates, transfers, drop-outs, etc.).
- b. At its discretion, the District may continue to pursue collection efforts.
- c. To the extent permitted by law, the District may attempt to achieve collection of a food-service-program debt by referring the debt to a collection service, initiating an action in small claims court, or pursuing other legal action. Costs associated with such actions may be added to the debt that is owed. However, before the District takes any of the steps identified in this paragraph, the District will

communicate the intended course of action to a person responsible for payment and provide a final notice of the amount due.

6. Additional Information and Assistance to Households

Assistance with all issues and questions related to the District's food service program, including eligibility and applications for free or reduced-price meals, student food service accounts, payment methods, the District's online account management system, as well as the specific issues addressed in these procedures, school families can refer to the Nutrition Services Supervisor, or contact the Business Services Administrative Assistant, housed at the District Administrative Offices; 301 North Fourth Street, Black /River Falls, WI 54615.

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement Update

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

LEGAL REF.: Sections 115.34 Wisconsin Statutes
120.10(16)
120.13(6) & (10)

CROSS REF.: 760, Nutrition Services
761, Free and Reduced Price Meals

Revised: May 1, 2017

Approved: June 19, 2017