

534 UNPAID MEAL CHARGES**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students receive healthy meals through the school district's Food and Nutrition Program and so school district employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. 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 school meals as well as to maintain the financial integrity of the school Food and Nutrition Program.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 124D.111, Subd. 4 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: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 534 (Unpaid Meal Charges)

Adopted with revision from MSBA/MASA Model Policy 534, Orig. 2017

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II. PAYMENT OF MEALS

School Meal Accounts are set up on a prepayment basis. Families may add money to School Meal Accounts in a number of convenient ways including: electronic payments, payments mailed to the Food & Nutrition office, and payments delivered to the school office or cafeteria.

- A. Students may pay cash for meals, second meals and a la carte items at any time.
- B. When a School Meals Account does not have a positive balance, a student shall not be allowed to charge a second meal or a la carte items until the account has a positive balance.
- C. If the school district receives school lunch aid under Minn. Stat. 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.

III. LOW OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES – NOTIFICATION

- A. The school district will make reasonable efforts to notify families of School Meal Account balances via the Parent Portal, US mail, letters sent home, e-mail or phone calls.
- B. Reminders for payment of outstanding student meal balances will not demean or stigmatize any student participating in the school lunch program.

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 and 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. School Meals Accounts with negative balances of more than -\$150 will be turned over for collection assistance. 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.

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V. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

- A. This policy and any pertinent supporting information shall be provided in writing 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.

- B. The school district may post the policy on the school district's website, in addition to providing the required written notification described above.