



Walnut Valley Unified School District

Nutrition Services Department

880 South Lemon Avenue, Walnut, CA 91789 (909) 595-1261 ext. 31322

“KIDS FIRST - Every Student, Every Day”

MEAL CHARGE POLICY

- **Reimbursable Meals:** Students will not be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from other purchases. Students may **NOT** purchase or charge a la carte meals/snack or “extra items” if the account is negative.
- **Policy Communication:** Nutrition Services will ensure the policy is provided in writing to all families at the start of each school year and to families transferring to the school midyear. The meal charge policy will be communicated to all school or district-level staff responsible for policy enforcement. This includes school food service professionals responsible for collecting payment of meals at the point of service, staff involved in notifying families of low or negative balances, and staff involved in enforcing any other aspect of the policy. School social workers, school nurses, liaisons for homeless, migrant, and/or runaway students, and other staff members assisting students in need will also be informed of the policy.
- **Delinquent Meal Charge Debt:** Also known as unrecovered debt, delinquent debt refers to meal charges that have not been paid by the student(s) or parent(s) during the fiscal year. Nutrition Services will take all reasonable steps to recover the unrecovered or delinquent debt, and if attempts to recover funds are unsuccessful by the end of the fiscal year, then the CDE considers the debt as bad debt. The CDE does not permit LEAs to carry the unpaid meal charges to the next fiscal year, as stated in the CDE MB SNP-06-2015.
- **Negative/Unpaid Balance Notification:** Parent or guardians will be notified whenever their account has a low or negative balance. Parent or guardian will be notified via automated phone message or in writing that full payment is due within ten (10) school days from the date of the notice. In cases of repeated nonpayment, the Superintendent or designee may contact parent or guardians to discuss the reasons for the nonpayment. The Superintendent or designee may:
 - Evaluate individual circumstances to determine if the student's parent or guardian needs assistance completing an application for free or reduced-price meals
 - Enter into a repayment plan with parent or guardian for payment of the student's unpaid meal charge balance over a period of time. As necessary, the repayment plan may allow the unrecovered or delinquent debt to carry over into the next fiscal year.
- **Recordkeeping:** Once delinquent debts are converted to bad debts, records relating to those charges must be in accordance with the record retention requirements outlined in Title 7, *Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR)*, sections 210.9(b)(17) and 210.15(b).
- **Bad debt must be covered by nonfederal funding sources (e.g., Parent-Teachers Association or district general fund) to repay the nonprofit school food service account (NSFSA) for the total amount:** Title 2, *Code of Federal Regulations*, Section 200.426: Bad debts are an unallowable cost to federal programs. According to federal guidance, unpaid meal charges are designated as unrecovered or delinquent debt until it is deemed uncollectable, at which time it becomes bad debt.

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- **Students Shall Not Be Shamed:** A student whose parent or guardian has unpaid meal charges is not shamed, treated differently, or served a meal that differs from what a student whose parent or guardian does not have unpaid meal fees would receive under the meal policy.
- **No adverse action against students for unpaid meal debt:** Nutrition Services will **NOT** take any action directed at a student to collect unpaid meal debt, instead these efforts will be directed to the parent or guardian of the student.
- **Nutrition Services is required to conduct direct certification matches and encourage households to submit household meal applications:** The law requires Nutrition Services to review direct certification match lists and encourage the household to submit a household application no later than 10 days after the pupil's school meal account has reached a negative balance. Before sending the notification, Nutrition Services must attempt to directly certify the student for F/RP meals. If unable to directly certify the student—or find their names on a homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, Head Start list from the liaison, or the foster list available on CALPADS—then a paper or electronic application will be provided.
- **Meal Payment:** Online payments may be made through eFunds. This is a pre-payment system whereby parents or guardians can pre-pay for meals, check account balance, view transaction history and add money electronically from a computer or mobile device. Money may also be deposited into student accounts via cash or check at the school site. Any returned checks will be assessed a \$25.00 fee. Maximum of 2 returned checks are allowed; after the second incident **CASH ONLY** will be required from the parent or guardian for the student account. Money left in the student's account at the end of a school year will be carried over into the next school year. Collection efforts for delinquent debt will continue into the new school year. Refunds are only allowed if the student leaves the district for any reason (graduation, transfer to another district, etc.).

Nutrition Services Website: www.walnutnutrition.org to access eFunds (online payment system).

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.

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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.

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