

UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

I. PURPOSE

Cambridge-Isanti Schools recognizes the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide for breakfast and lunch for their children. Proper nutritional intake is essential for adequate learning to occur.

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 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 nutrition program.

II. PAYMENT OF MEALS

- A. Families may submit payment via cash or check at any school office or the Education Services Center, or utilize our online payment system through Family Access via debit/credit card or checking account. Food Service staff are able to accept payments over the phone at the Education Services Center, and can be reached at 763.689.6210.
- B. 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.
- C. A student with an outstanding meal charge debt will be allowed to purchase a meal if the student pays for the meal when it is received.
- D.. When a student has a negative account balance, the student will not be allowed to charge a snack, a la carte item or second entree.

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.
 - 1. Students will be notified in the line each day when their account is less than \$10.00.

2. Families that sign up for a low balance e-mail alert through Family Access will be sent an e-mail each afternoon that the balance is below \$10.00.
3. Families that utilize the district app can enable notifications to their device at their choice of meal balance amount.
4. Families have the option of setting up automatic payments, so that a payment method on file will be charged when their meal balance account decreases past an amount of their choosing.
5. When the family meal account balance is negative in excess of the amount of \$3.00, a courtesy meal of milk and cereal will be offered at breakfast and a sandwich and milk will be offered at lunch.
6. After the second consecutive occurrence of offering the courtesy breakfast and lunch, the food service cashier will contact the food service Administrative Assistant. The Food Service Administrative Assistant will review the account, actions taken and attempt to contact the parent/guardian. If the Food Service Administrative Assistant's attempts are not successful, the School Counselor/Social Worker will be contacted and asked to assist.
7. Assistance from county Social Services may be requested by the school social worker/counselor for possible neglect when above procedures are unsuccessful.

- 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. Families may apply for free/reduced meals anytime during the school year. Applications are mailed to all families in the school district prior to the school year. In addition, applications are available at the district office, all school offices and on the districts website under Food Service.
- C. 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.
- D. The school district may not enlist the assistance of non-school district employees, such as volunteers, to engage in debt collection efforts.

V. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

- A. This policy and any 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 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.

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

Reviewed: 2-21-02, 2-22-11, 7-19-12, 2-23-17, 9-20-18

Approved: 3-21-02, 3-20-10, 3-23-17, 10-11-18