

UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

PURPOSE:

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 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.

PAYMENT OF MEALS:

- A. Students have use of a family meal account. When the balance reaches zero (\$0), students may charge no more than \$50 to this account. When an account reaches this limit a student shall not be allowed to charge further meals, extra entrees or a la carte items until the negative account balance is paid in full. Families may add money to their food service account balance by making payments online via the district website, or may send cash or check to the school office to be deposited into their account.
- B. If the school district receives aid through the National School Lunch (NSL) and/or School Breakfast (SB) programs, 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. The school district may provide an alternate meal to a student who does not have sufficient funds in the student's account or cannot pay cash for a meal. The school district will accommodate special dietary needs with respect to alternate meals. The cost of the alternative meal (\$1.00) will be charged to the student's account or otherwise charged to the student.

LOW OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES – NOTIFICATIONS:

- A. The school district will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low or fall below zero.
- B. Families will be notified of an outstanding low/negative balance once the account reaches a balance of \$10 and below. Families will be notified via email, office

notifications given to students, or by letters sent home regarding low/negative balances. The Food Service Director may also contact parents/guardians regarding negative account balances.

- C. Reminders for payment of outstanding student meal balances will not demean or stigmatize any student participating in the school lunch program.

UNPAID MEAL CHARGES:

- A. The 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 priced 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. Negative balances of more than \$100, not paid prior to the end of the month will be turned over to the superintendent or superintendent's designee for collection. 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.
- D. The school district may not enlist the assistance of non-school district employees, such as volunteers, to engage in debt collection efforts

COMMUNICATION OF THE 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 REF.: -WI Stats. § 124D.111, Subd.4
-42 U.S.C. § 1751 *et seq.* (Health and Hunger-Free Kids Act)
-7 C.F.R. § 210 *et seq.* (School Lunch Program Regulations)
-7 C.F.R. § 220.8 *et seq.* (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

APPROVED: November 13, 2017