

NONINSTRUCTIONAL OPERATIONS AND BUSINESS SERVICES

Series 700

Policy Title: Meal Charges

Code No. 710.04

In accordance with state and federal law, the Community School District adopts the following policy to ensure 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, prevent the overt identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals, and maintain the financial integrity of the nonprofit school nutrition program.

Payment of Meals Students have use of a meal account. Families may add money to this account through their JMC Family Portal or at any school office.

Students who qualify for free or reduced meals shall never be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from previous purchases. Schools are encouraged to provide a reimbursable meal to students with outstanding meal charge debt. If an alternate meal is provided, the meal must be the same meal presented in the same manner to any student requesting an alternate meal.

Employees may use a charge account for meals, but may charge no more than \$35.00 to this account. When an account reaches this limit, an employee shall not be allowed to charge further meals or a la carte items until the negative account balance is paid.

Negative Account Balances

The school district will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low. Additionally, the school district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. The school district will coordinate communications with the student's parent or guardian to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Parents or guardians will be notified of an outstanding negative balance once the student owes five meals or more. Parents or guardians will be notified by automated email system, cell phone text message and letters sent home. Negative balances not paid prior to the end of the semester will be turned over to the superintendent or superintendent's designee for collection. Options may include: collection agencies, small claims court, or any other legal method permitted by law.

Unpaid Student Meals Account

The district will establish an unpaid student meals account in a school nutrition fund. Funds from private sources and funds from the district flexibility account may be deposited into the unpaid school meals account in accordance with law. Funds deposited into this account shall be used only to pay individual student meal debt.

Communication of the Policy

The policy and supporting information regarding meal charges shall be provided in writing to:

All households at or before the start of each school year;

Students and families who transfer into the district, at time of transfer; and

All staff responsible for enforcing any aspect of the policy.

Records of how and when the policy and supporting information was communicated to households and staff will be retained.

It is the responsibility of the superintendent to develop an administrative regulation for implementing this policy.

This is a mandatory policy.

NOTE: The IASB sample policy is drafted to be consistent for all grade levels. However, local boards may vary the meal charge policy for elementary, middle, and high schools. Districts should update the policy accordingly if they wish to delineate meal charge practices based on the grade level of students.

NOTE: If the district elects to provide alternate meals for students, the alternate meal must contain components available to all students and be provided in the same manner as meals are provided to other students. Additionally, the district is expected to accommodate special dietary needs when a child's disability restricts their diet.

NOTE: The Iowa Department of Education has tools and resources available to help districts with the school nutrition program and meal charge policy implementation and review. Please visit the "School Meals" section of the Iowa Department of Education's website.

NOTE: School districts must follow appropriate debt collection practices when trying to recover unpaid meal charges..

Legal Reference: 42 U.S.C. §§ 1751 et seq.
7 C.F.R. §§ 210 et seq.
U.S. DEP'T OF AGRIC., SP 46-2016, UNPAID MEAL CHARGES: LOCAL MEAL CHARGE POLICIES (2016).

U.S. DEP'T OF AGRIC., SP 47-2016, UNPAID MEAL CHARGES: CLARIFICATION ON COLLECTION OF DELINQUENT MEAL PAYMENTS (2016).

U.S. DEP'T OF AGRIC., SP 57-2016, UNPAID MEAL CHARGES: GUIDANCE AND Q&A (2016).

Iowa Code 283A.
281 I.A.C. 58.

Cross References: 710.1 School Food Program
710.01-R(1) School Food Program - School Nutrition Program Civil Rights Complaints Procedure
710.01-E(1) School Food Program - School Nutrition Program Notices of Nondiscrimination
710.01-E(2) School Food Program - Child Nutrition Programs Civil Rights Complaint Form
710.02 Free or Reduced Cost Meals Eligibility
710.3 Vending Machines
710.4 Meal Charge Policy

Adopted: : January 20, 2025

Reviewed:

Revised: