

STUDENT UNPAID MEAL CHARGES PROCEDURE

Effective 7/1/2017

PURPOSE

To ensure students receive healthy and nutritious meals through the school district's nutrition program and school district employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. We are committed to ensuring all students can succeed at school. This means we will not deny a student a meal, even if their meal account is below \$0 (zero dollars), while maintaining the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.

PAYMENT OF MEALS

Students may qualify for educational benefits, including free or reduced price meals. All families are encouraged to submit an Application for Educational Benefits, found on the district website. Until an application is approved and written notice has been received, parents/guardians are responsible for providing meals from home or money for school meals. Benefit eligibility letters will be mailed.

All food, beverage, and meal purchases are to be prepaid before service begins. Money can be deposited online through FeePay (<https://isd191.feepay.com>) or with cash or check in person at a school or the district office. FeePay may be used by parents/guardians to make payments, review meal account purchases, and establish automated email notifications when the balance reaches a specific dollar amount. There is no fee for parents/guardians to use this service.

MEAL ACCOUNT BALANCE REMINDERS

Students have use of a meal account for food, beverage and meal purchases. Students may inquire about their balance at a point of sale (POS) or cash kiosk. Food Service employees will discreetly communicate the meal account balance to a student, when requested. Written reminders in multiple languages will be made available at the POS and cash kiosks for students. Elementary sites may offer a hand stamp reminder upon a student's request. Parents/Guardians may inquire about their student's meal account balance by contacting the Food Service department.

Upon initial registration of a FeePay account, parents will receive email notifications when a student's meal account reaches below \$0 (zero dollars). The alert amount may be changed by parents/guardians at any time. Parents must designate if they wish to not receive email alerts from FeePay. District Food and Nutrition Services may utilize written notification, automated phone calling, or text messages to notify parents/guardians of negative meal account balances. To the extent possible, notifications will be translated into multiple languages. Parents/Guardians may not opt out of receiving notifications from the school district. Parents/guardians are expected to have a current address, working phone number and/or email in the parent portal, such as ParentVue.

No student in the serving line will be denied a meal. If a student's account does not have enough money to pay for a breakfast and/or lunch meal, a student will still be allowed to purchase a meal, which will cause the account balance to become negative. All students will be provided a meal regardless of their account balance. While the district is under no legal obligation to do so, we believe this is in the best interest of the student.

Accounts must contain the amount needed to cover the cost of a la carte purchases, which means a single food or beverage item. Parents may request dollar amount limits for a la carte purchases and must communicate this in writing to the school Food Service Manager. We encourage parents to first discuss with students, what they are allowed or not allowed to purchase, before considering placing restrictions on the account. Limits are discouraged because they cause delays during serving times.

UNPAID MEAL ACCOUNT PROCESS

Step 1

If your student's meal account runs out of money and falls below \$0 (zero dollars), we will let you know with phone calls, text messages and/or emails. Please make sure we have your current contact information. You can do this online through ParentVUE or by contacting your child's school.

Step 2

If your student's meal account continues to fall further below \$20 (twenty dollars), we will take other actions to contact you and try to collect the debt. This may include using a collection agency.

Step 3

If your student's meal account falls below \$50 (fifty dollars) or more, or a household of 2 or more students falls below \$100 (one hundred dollars), a United States Postal Service certified letter will be mailed to the address on record. If there is no response from the parent or guardian within 14 days after receipt of the certified letter, the parent or guardian name on the account and amount owed at the present time will be sent to a third party collection agency. We are willing to work with you on a payment plan which may avoid involvement of a collection agency.

Accounts will be reviewed on a quarterly basis or more frequently as necessary and action will be taken based on the specific circumstances related to the account. Any negative balance that exists on an account for more than 30 days may result in a Step 3 response.

All notifications and communication efforts will be documented by district employees and made available for audit purposes. Principals, Social Workers, Guidance Counselors, Cultural Liaisons, or other designated school individuals or resources may be asked to assist in facilitating the understanding to the parent/guardian as requested by the Food Service Director.

Donations will be accepted and directed to general or specific accounts, upon request. All donations will be processed at the district level.

More details about how the handling of unpaid student meal charges are available online at www.isd191.org or by contacting the District Food Service Office at 952-707-2051.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.