

408.1 – Financial Management

~~The Child Nutrition Program (CNP) shall financially operate on a non-profit, self-sustaining basis and as a participant in the National School Lunch Program comply with applicable U.S. Department of Agriculture regulations. The District shall be responsible for paying the employer costs of FICA, kitchen utilities and nonpayment of meals provided to students. All other associated costs shall be the responsibility of the CNP.~~

~~Parents and/or guardians are encouraged to pay for student meals in advance to avoid a negative account balance. Parents and/or guardians may view their student meal balances in the student records software or through the district online payment vendor. Parents and/or guardians may also sign up for low balance notices and/or automatic payments with the online payment vendor.~~

~~Parents and/or guardians may request a refund of lunch account balances by contacting the school lunch cashier or the CNP office. Refunds will be mailed by check to the parent/guardian. Cash refunds are not permitted. Balances may also be transferred to a sibling’s account at any time by contacting the CNP office.~~

~~Parents and/or guardians are responsible for timely meal payments and measures will be taken to collect on outstanding accounts as per Administrative Procedure AP 408.1 (see AP ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES folder) Students will be provided a meal regardless of their current account balance. Ala carte menu items are supplemental to the meal and must be paid for at the time of purchase or require a positive account balance.~~

Adopted: 11/15/2017 Revised: 06/08/2016 Reviewed: 09/13/2017
07/13/2016 05/11/2016

Unpaid School Meal Charges

The District adopts the following policy to ensure 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, avoid identifying to other students or by standers students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals, and maintain the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.

Unpaid Meal Charges

When a student’s school meal account funds are exhausted, a student paying the full or reduced price for meals may charge no more than 10 meals to his or her school meal account. Students may charge breakfasts and/or lunches up to the maximum amount. Charging of a la carte or extra items to a student’s account will not be permitted.

Students who have charged the maximum amount allowed will be allowed to charge further meals, while making payments until the negative account balance has been paid in full.

Students who have charged the maximum amount and cannot pay out of pocket for a meal will not be provided an alternate meal.

Students who qualify for free meals shall never be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from previous purchases.

The Board directs the Superintendent to draft a procedure detailing the manner in which notice of low account balances shall be given. The District will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low. The District will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges. At least one written warning shall be provided to a student and his or her parent/guardian prior to denying meals for exceeding the District's charge limit. Families will be notified by district communications.

This notice may include a copy or description of this policy and information regarding how to apply for free or reduced-price meals, including contact information for Child Nutrition, who can help them with the application process. Active efforts to encourage eligible households to apply for free or reduced lunch may be used to prevent meal charges.

Students and parents/guardians of students are encouraged to prepay meal costs. Payments for school meals may be made by

- 1. Bringing payment to the school OR District office;*
- 2. Making payment on the District website/Online Meal Payments*

Notification

The District will provide a copy of this policy to all households at the start of school each year and to families and students that transfer into the District at the time of transfer. All District staff responsible for enforcing any aspect of the policy shall also receive a copy of this policy. It may also be communicated to school social workers, school nurses, the homeless liaison, or other staff members who may assist students in need. The District may also make this policy available in student handbooks, on the District website, or by other means deemed appropriate.

Records

Records of how and when this policy is communicated to households and staff will be retained.

The District shall also retain documentation of the handling of bad debt, including:

- 1. Evidence of efforts to collect unpaid meal charges in accordance with this policy;*
- 2. Evidence the collection efforts fell within the timeframe and methods established by this policy;*
- 3. Financial documentation showing when the unpaid meal charge(s) became an operating loss; and*
- 4. Evidence any funds written off as bad debt were restored to the nonprofit school food service account using non-Federal sources.*

Charitable Assistance

The District may establish an unpaid meal charges fund to cover the cost of unpaid meal charges. Charitable groups, individuals, school fundraisers, and others may donate to this fund. Parents/guardians of children who pay the full amount for school meals and who have funds left over in their school meals account at the end of the school year may be offered the option of donating these funds to the unpaid meal charges fund.

If the District chooses to establish an unpaid meal charges fund, the Superintendent or his or her designee shall establish procedures for the use of such funds.

Cross Reference: § 4175 Required Annual Notices

Legal References: SP 46-2016 Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies, United States Department of Agriculture

Other References: 2017 Edition: Overcoming the Unpaid Meal Challenge: Proven Strategies from Our Nation's Schools, United States Department of Agriculture; Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance Q&As, March 23, 2017, United States Department of Agriculture.

Policy History:

Adopted on:

Revised on:

Reviewed on: