

**EFDA
COLLECTION OF MONEY /
FOOD TICKETS**

Meal Charges

To ensure students receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day the District shall maintain a meal charge program that minimizes identification of children with insufficient funds to pay for school meals and maintain the financial integrity of the district food service fund account.

Further, the District shall abide by program regulation 7 CFR 245.5 by providing in writing to parents and guardians of all students who attend the District's schools, of the District's policy regarding meal charges, and information about applying for free or reduced price meals.

The notice shall be provided to all households at the beginning of the instructional year or at the time a student begins participating in the food services program. The notice may be provided in conjunction with notice of action on an application for free or reduced-price meals.

The District shall provide the written meal charge policy to all school staff responsible for policy enforcement, including school food service professionals responsible for collecting payment for meals at the point of service, staff involved in notifying families of low or negative balances, and staff involved in enforcing any other aspect of the meal charge policy. Other staff members who may assist student and families in need should also be informed of the policy.

Payment is to be made in advance for full price or reduced price meals. The recordkeeping system shall account for payments received, meals served, and account balances remaining for each participating student. When the balance remaining in a student's account reaches an amount equivalent to the cost for three (3) meals, a notice is to be presented to the student and parent/guardian advising that the account needs to be replenished as only prepayment for two (2) meals remains. The notice is to be repeated when the balance reaches one (1) meal, and again on the day the final paid meal is served. The notice shall explain the procedure should the student not have sufficient funds to pay for a meal.

When a student's lunch meal account has been depleted, the student is to be granted up to two (2) additional full meals pending replenishment of the account. When the account reaches two (2) meals with payment in arrears, the student will be served an alternate meal in lieu of the full meal, for which no charge will be made.

Upon replenishment of the account, the two (2) meals in arrears will be deducted from the deposit to bring the account current. Whenever a student is no longer

eligible for service of a full meal due to a two (2) meal negative account balance, a designated member of the school staff will contact the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to determine an appropriate resolution of the circumstance. If a parent/guardian discloses difficulty paying for reduced or full price meals, or has developed a history of late payments or negative account balances, an application for free or reduced-price meals is to be provided as changes in the family's economic situation may meet qualifications for assistance or additional assistance.

The District will make reasonable efforts to work with families to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. Unpaid meal charges may be carried over at the end of the school year as delinquent debt and collection efforts may continue into the new school year. The District will take every step to ensure that the efforts to collect unpaid balances will in no way negatively impact the students involved. Such efforts shall focus primarily on the parents or guardians responsible for providing for the student's funds for meals. When the District determines that collection efforts for delinquent debt are useless or too costly, the debt must be reclassified as "bad debt" as defined in 2 CFR 200.426. Bad debt must be written off as operating loss. However, "bad debt" must be restored using non-federal funds. Delinquent meal charges that are converted to "bad debt" must be recorded and maintained in accordance with record retention requirements in 7 CFR 210.9(b)(17) and 7 CFR 210.15(b).

Although the District policy is for no student to go without a meal due to insufficient funds in the student's account, an alternative menu may be provided until a student's meal account deficit is resolved.

Unpaid charges should not exceed \$6.00 dollars per student during a fiscal year.

No meal charges will be allowed under any circumstance during the last ten (10) days of the school year. All meal charges should be paid within the last ten (10) days of the school year.

Adopted: May 10, 2017

LEGAL REF.:

The Child Nutrition Act (42 U.S.C. 1771 *et. seq.*)

CROSS REF.:

JL – Student Wellness