

Meal Charge and Debt Collection Procedure

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to establish meal account maintenance in the provision of meals to students.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF PROCEDURES

A. The goal of the Food Services Department of Independent School District #271 is to provide nutritious meals to students to promote healthy eating habits and enhance learning.

B. It is the policy of Independent School District #271 to offer breakfast and lunches which meet state and federal guidelines.

- The purchase of school meals is set up on a prepaid basis. Students may purchase meals when funds have been deposited into their meal account.
- Our district strives to ensure that nutritious meals are available to all students. A student's prepaid meal account should be kept up to date in order to avoid passing on debt to the school district.
- Students have the option to purchase a la carte items with a positive meal fund balance.

C. Families may apply for free/reduced-price meal benefits anytime during the school year. Meal applications are available to all families in the school/district prior to the start of the school year. In addition, applications are available online. If household income or size changes, families can apply for meal benefits anytime during the school year.

III. CHARGE PROCEDURE

A. If the student account is less than adequate to pay for breakfast and/or lunch, a student will be allowed to charge.

- Students in grades K-12 will always be given a meal. While the district is under no legal obligation to do so, we believe that this is in the best interest of the student.
- Students are not allowed to purchase any ala carte items if their meal account is negative.

IV. NOTIFICATION OF ACCOUNT STATUS

A. Student meal account balances are available to families in the following places:

- Families can check their student's meal account balance via PayPams and receive email notifications from PayPams.
- Families can check their student meal account balance in the HUB.
- Families can contact the district Food Services Office or the student's school kitchen for account balances.

- The district will send out daily phone call notices to parents advising them of negative meal account balance.
- Students may be given a written or verbal reminder in the meal service line.

B. The student/family will be notified, by automated phone call, when the account has a negative balance.

- Food Service Department will encourage parents to complete the free/reduced-price meal application.

V. COLLECTION OF UNPAID MEAL DEBT

A. Students eligible for free or reduced-price meals will always be served a meal regardless of unpaid food service accounts. When a student has "cash in hand" to pay for a meal, the student will be served a meal regardless of unpaid foodservice accounts.

B. When the student meal balance is \$150 negative, the following, collection actions will be taken: Letter sent requesting payment in full or the account may be turned over to a collection agency.

- The building principal or their designee may contact the family and review with them their responsibility to provide meals for their student when a negative meal account balance is greater than negative \$100.00.
- The student/family may provide their own meals until the meal debt is paid.

Source: Independent School District 271

Reviewed: J. Hazel and C. Murray, 6-14-17

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Revised: 2-9-18, 9-17-19