

725 STUDENT MEAL CHARGE POLICY

I. PURPOSE

Lakeville Area Public Schools believe that the ability of students to learn is intrinsically related to students having reasonable access to nutritious meals. District employees, parents/guardians and students must, however, have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges through the Student Nutrition program while also maintaining the dignity of each child and the financial integrity of the Student Nutrition program.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

School districts cannot provide meals to students at no charge unless a student qualifies for free or reduced cost meals. Parents or guardians are responsible for maintaining a positive balance in their child's meal account or sending meals from home. Students will, however, always be treated with care and respect whenever there is an issue of payment.

III. PAYMENT OF MEALS

- A. Payment for meals can be submitted via cash, check or online payment (www.paypams.com) to the Student Nutrition department.
- B. To ensure uninterrupted meal services, cash or check payments should be made prior to 10:00 A.M. Online payments may take up to 24 hours to appear in a student's account.
- C. Families may apply for free or reduced cost meals at any time during the school year. Applications may be obtained at each school, the district office or online at <http://isd194.org/lunch-menus/>
- D. Families who qualify for free or reduced cost meals remain responsible for meal charges accrued prior to approval of benefits.
- E. Families who are not directly certified for free or reduced cost meals by the State of Minnesota must reapply after July 1st of each school year to qualify for benefits.

IV. LOW OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES

- A. Parents/Guardians who sign up for Paypams can elect to receive notifications when their child's account reaches a designated dollar amount of their choosing. Use of the online payment service for depositing money into a student's account is not required, however, to receive notifications.
- B. A student must have a positive account balance to purchase a la carte items.
- C. Meal accounting software provides that each student's account is independent of other household members. Funds may not be transferred between siblings unless verbal or written permission is received and documented from the parent or guardian.
- D. The District will make a reasonable effort to communicate low account balances (i.e., at a balance of fifteen dollars per student) to families that are not qualified for free or reduced meals, including phone call, email, and letter (in this order) to the parent or guardian.
- E. Where appropriate, families may be encouraged to apply for free and reduced cost meals for their children.
- F. If circumstances occur in which a student's account debt continues to increase and the parents or guardians are unresponsive to efforts to resolve account issues, the District reserves the right to provide an alternate meal. Written notice will be provided to the parent or guardian three school days prior to an alternate meal being offered, notifying them of the date which the student will begin receiving an alternate meal. (An alternate meal will generally consist of a cold sandwich, a serving each of fruits and vegetables and skim or 1% milk.)
- G. The cost of each alternate meal will be charged to the student's account.
- H. The expectation is all fees owed the district will be paid in full on the last day the student will be attending classes.
- I. Four weeks prior to the end of each school year, in addition to posted notifications and alerts at the Point of Sale, a voicemail notification will be sent out to all secondary parents and guardians informing them that students will begin receiving an alternate meal once their meal account balance falls below a zero dollar balance effective three weeks prior to the end of the school year. Notification will not be mailed to families during this time.
- J. Negative balances carried over from elementary to secondary grade levels may result in a student receiving alternate meals until their meal account deficit is resolved.
- K. The District will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. Unpaid meal charges are designated as delinquent debt when payment is overdue, the debt is considered collectable and efforts are being made to collect it. Collection options may include, but are not limited to:

1. use of a collection agency
 2. claims in conciliation court
 3. other legal method permitted by law
- L. Donations will be accepted and directed to general or specific accounts upon request. All donations processed through the Student Nutrition department.

Legal References: USDA, Food and Nutrition Services, Memo SP 23-2017, Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q&A.