

# \$\$ UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

Mesabi East Schools Adopted: December 4, 2017

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students receive healthy and nutritious meals through the school district's nutrition program and that school 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 and minimize identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals as well as to maintain the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.

## II. PAYMENT OF MEALS

A. Students have use of a meal account. When the account balance reaches zero, a student may charge no more than -\$10.00 to this account. When an account reaches this limit, a student shall not be allowed to charge second meals or a la carte items until the negative account balance is paid. All students will still be allowed to have a regular lunch.

B. Payments may be made online at [www.isd2711.org](http://www.isd2711.org) and then click the 'Parents and Students' tab. From there, select 'e-Funds for Schools'. A payment may also be sent to school and should be clearly labeled with the student's name, grade, and parent name.

C. If the school district receives school lunch aid under Minn. Stat. § 124D.111, it must make lunch available without charge to all participating students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals regardless of account balance.

D. A student with an outstanding meal charge debt will be allowed to purchase a meal if the student pays for the meal when it is received.

E. The school district will provide an alternate meal that meets federal and state requirements to a student who has an account balance of -\$10.00 or more or cannot pay cash for a meal. The school district will accommodate special dietary needs with respect to alternate meals.

F. When a student has a negative account balance, the student will not be allowed to charge a snack item.

G. If a parent or guardian chooses to send in one payment that is to be divided between sibling accounts, the parent or guardian must specify how the funds are to be distributed to the students' accounts. Funds may not be transferred between sibling accounts unless written permission is received from the parent or guardian.

## III. LOW OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES – NOTIFICATION

A. The school district will make reasonable efforts by notifying families each week via the BrightArrow Instant Alert calling system when meal account balances are low or fall below zero according to the following guidelines:

i. 1st Alert – When account balance reaches \$5.00 or below.

ii. 2nd Alert – When account balance reaches \$0 or negative.

iii. 3rd Alert – When account balance reaches negative \$10.00.

B. Families can check their child's lunch account balance on PowerSchool, or by contacting the District Office.

C. Reminders for payment of outstanding student meal balances will not demean or stigmatize any student participating in the school lunch program.

## IV. UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

A. The school district will make reasonable efforts to communicate with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Where appropriate, families may be encouraged to apply for free and reduced-price meals for their children.

B. The school district makes 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.

C. Negative balances of more than \$100.00, will be turned over to the superintendent or superintendent's designee for collection. Col-

lection options may include, but are not limited to, use of collection agencies, claims in the conciliation court, or any other legal method permitted by law.

D. The school district may not enlist the assistance of non-school district employees, such as volunteers, to engage in debt collection efforts.

## V. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

A. This policy and any pertinent supporting information shall be provided in writing (i.e., mail, email, back-to-school packet, student handbook, etc.) to:

1. all households at or before the start of each school year;

2. students and families who transfer into the school district, at the time of enrollment; and

3. all school district personnel who are responsible for enforcing this policy.

B. The school district may post the policy on the school district's website, in addition to providing the required written notification described above.

## Legal References:

Minn. Stat. § 124D.111, Subd. 4

42 U.S.C. § 1751 et seq. (Healthy and Hunger-Free Kids Act)

7 C.F.R. § 210 et seq. (School Lunch Program Regulations)

7 C.F.R. § 220.8 (School Breakfast Program Regulations)

USDA Policy Memorandum SP 46-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies (2016)

USDA Policy Memorandum SP 47-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments (2016)

USDA Policy Memorandum SP 23-2017, Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q&A