

MEAL CHARGE

I. Federal Requirement

This policy addresses the requirement for school food authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) to institute and clearly communicate a meal charge policy, which would include, if applicable, the availability of alternate meals.

II. Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the district. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the Child Nutrition department. The goals of this standard of practice are:

- A. To treat all learners with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts.
- B. To support positive situations with district staff, district business policies, learners and parent/guardian to the maximum extent possible.
- C. To establish procedures that are age appropriate.
- D. To encourage parents/guardians to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the learner.
- E. To establish a consistent district approach regarding charges and collection of charges.

III. Scope of Responsibility

- A. The Child Nutrition department or designee is responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the learner's parent/guardian.
- B. The parent/guardian shall be required to provide payment for the child nutrition charges on their account.

III. Scope of Responsibility

A. Payment Options

The Brookings School District will accept the following methods of payment:

- a. Online ~~through E-funds~~ with an approved credit or debit card
- b. ~~Check or cash~~ ~~At a child's school~~ ~~by check or cash~~
- c. ~~Check or cash~~ ~~At the District Administration Office~~ ~~by check or cash~~

B. Balance Notifications

The Brookings School District will use the following steps to notify parents/guardians of low account balances:

- a. Families will receive a low balance email, voice and/or texting notification (pending updated family information is provided to the Child Nutrition office) when family balance is \$20 or less.

- b. ~~The Cashier at each school will notify learners of a low balance when balance is \$15 or less.~~
- c. ~~Written notification will be issued to families when the balance reaches negative \$5.~~
- d. Phone calls will be made **daily** for negative account balances.

C. Negative Balances

In the case of a negative account balance, the Brookings School District will apply the following procedures:

- a. Learners may continue to purchase breakfast and lunch meals **while the balance notifications continue** until the family account balance reaches negative \$25.
 - i. No a la carte purchases will be allowed for any child with a negative lunch balance.
 - ii. ~~If an account reaches an amount greater than negative \$25, learners may be served an alternate meal option.~~
- b. Adults and visitors are **only** allowed to purchase a meal or any additional items if there are adequate funds in the account to cover the cost of the purchases, **or pay cash**.
- c. ~~If a family balance goes beyond negative \$25, arrangements may be made by contacting the office of the Director of Child Nutrition Services.~~

D. Closing an Account

- a. Refunds of account balances will be provided to a family upon request. The family must provide a name and address to receive the refund check. Checks are mailed to families following the next regular school board meeting once a request is made.
- b. If a family chooses to donate the remaining funds to Food for Thought, or donate to a family within the district of their choice, it is the responsibility of that family to notify the Child Nutrition Office.

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