

Student Meal Charge Policy

Purpose of the Policy: The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the District. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the District and the schools. The goals of this policy are:

- **To provide** a healthy meal for all students regardless of meal account status.
- **To treat** all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts.
- **To support** positive situations with district staff, district business policies, students and parent to the maximum extent possible.
- **To establish** a consistent District policy regarding charges and collection of charges

Scope of Responsibility:

- **The Food Service Department:** Responsible for maintaining charge records, notifying each school of outstanding balances and for notifying student's parent of low and/or outstanding balances.
- **The School District:** Responsible for supporting the policy along with the Food Service Department.
- **The Parent:** Responsible for submission of free/reduced meal application in a timely manner (if appropriate) and maintain funding in their student's account at all times as necessary. **(Note: Until free/reduced meal application is approved/processed, parent is responsible for meal charges.)**

Background Information: When parents do not pay for their children's unpaid meal charges, their student's school must pay this bill which impacts funding for school programming.

Charge Policies:

Elementary School Charges:

- Elementary students are allowed to charge meals.
- Charges are to be paid in full by the end of every week.
- Elementary students will not be allowed to charge for seconds.

Middle School Charges:

- Middle School students will be allowed to charge up to 5 meals on their account.
- Charges are to be paid in full by the end of every week.
- Middle School students will not be allowed to charge for á la carte items or seconds.

High School Charges:

- High School students will be allowed to charge up to 3 meals on their account.
- Charges are to be paid in full by the end of every week.
- High School students will not be allowed to charge for á la carte items or seconds.

Parents will be notified of negative balances by letter, electronic e-mail, or phone call.

Potential Consequences:

If parent refuses to pay their charges, the district reserves the right to take steps deemed necessary to collect charges owed. Possible action is contacting small claims court to collect money owed.

Allowing charges to continuously accumulate can lead to deficits for Delta County Schools and is unfair to the households that pay for their meal.

Annual notice

The district shall notify students and their parents about this policy at the beginning of each school year. Notification shall also be provided to those students who transfer into the district during the school year. Information about this policy may also be included in student handbooks, student enrollment or registration packets and/or back-to-school packets and posted on district and school websites.

This policy will also be communicated to school and district-level staff responsible for this policy's enforcement, such as school food service staff 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 aspects of this policy.

Adoption date: June 15, 2017

LEGAL REF.: USDA Guidance SP 46-2016 (requires written policy regarding unpaid meal charges)