



POLICY – Unpaid Meal Charges

Adopted:

POLICY

Channing Hall is committed to creating a school environment that enhances student learning and encourages parents/legal guardians to ensure students receive the nutrition necessary to stay focused during school. School employees will treat students with dignity and respect to minimize the identification of children with insufficient funds to pay for school meals. The Administration acknowledges the need to maintain the financial integrity of school food service accounts. Unpaid meal practices will be consistent and transparent. Practices and procedures regarding reimbursable school meals will be communicated to employees and families.

Definitions

Collection Efforts: Using a collection agency or other means in order to collect unpaid meal balances.

Delinquent Account: A student’s meal fund account that does not have adequate funds to cover the meal charges.

Free Meal: A meal served to a student whose parents have qualified, based on federal standards, to have their child receive free meals. A free meal, by definition, is served at no cost to the student.

Non-Program Foods: A meal or food component that does not meet the U.S. Department of Agriculture regulations and may not be claimed for payment from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Examples include adult meals, extra milk, non-enrolled children meals, classroom snacks, school community events, etc.

Paid Meal: A meal served to a student whose parents have not qualified for free or reduced price meals. The parent must pay the lunch price charged by the school.

Reduced Price Meal: A meal served to a student whose parents have qualified, based on federal standards, to have their child receive a reduced priced meal. The cost for a reduced price meal is \$0.40 per lunch.

Reimbursable Meal: A meal that meets the U.S. Department of Agriculture regulations and may be claimed for payment from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Discrimination Prohibited

No person shall, on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, sexual orientation, or income, be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any child nutrition program or activity.

1. There will be no physical segregation of, nor any discrimination against, any student because of his or her inability to pay the full price of the meal or due to his or her eligibility for free and reduced price meals.

2. The names of the students eligible to receive free and reduced price meals shall not be published, posted, or announced in any manner, and there shall be no overt identification of any such students by any means.
3. No district employee may deny a meal benefit to any child as a disciplinary action.

School Meals

1. All reimbursable meals shall meet the minimum nutrition standards required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National School Lunch and Breakfast Program and 2010 Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act regulations.
 - a. This requirement does not apply to medically authorized special needs diets.
 - b. The lunch program will comply with the USDA's disability requirements for modified diets when a student has a documented disability and the state-approved Medical Statement to Request Special Meals, Accommodations, and Milk Substitutions form has been completed.
 - c. The lunch program may comply with requests for non-disability medical conditions.
 - d. Accommodations will be made on a case-by-case basis upon receipt of a completed request form.
 - e. Parents should coordinate with the school nurse or Special Education Director when making a request for special meals or accommodations.
2. School lunch menus are available on the school website.
3. The price for a paid meal shall comply with the federal Paid Lunch Equity guidelines and be approved by the Board.
4. The price for non-program foods must be sufficient to cover the full cost of the food, labor, equipment and program operations in accordance with federal regulations.

Free and Reduced Meals

1. Parents are encouraged to apply online for free and reduced priced meals. Applications are available in a variety of languages on the USDA website. The school must provide paper applications for parents who do not have access to online forms.
2. If the student's family receives benefits from the Special Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Family Employment Program (FEP), or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), the household qualifies for meals at no charge. Once the school receives notice of the student's or family's eligibility based on participation in one of these programs, the family does not have to complete or submit a free and reduced price application. The school will communicate in writing with the parents that their students are eligible for free meals. If a parent or family qualifies under one of these programs and has not received such a letter before school starts, the parent should contact the lunch program.
3. The school may complete an application for free and reduced price meals on behalf of the parents if school personnel have knowledge of the family's financial circumstances.
4. The lunch program will notify the parents that an application has been completed on their behalf.
5. Families can apply for free and reduced price meals at any time during the school year.
6. Employees must maintain the confidentiality of the identities of participants in the free and reduced price program.

Payment

1. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure that their child has money in his or her meal account.
2. Meals can be paid for electronically using the school's online meal payment system in person at the school.
3. If a student qualifies for free meals, no payments are due for the reimbursable meal. However, payment will be required for reduced meals and additional food purchases beyond the reimbursable meal.

Serving Students with Delinquent, Insufficient or Negative Meal Account Balances

1. The lunch program staff will exercise sensitivity and confidentiality in serving students with insufficient, delinquent, or negative meal accounts. No employee will subject a student to embarrassment or ridicule based on the balance in his or her meal accounts.
2. If a student's meal account is inadequate or delinquent to pay for a meal, the school will provide a full meal to the student; lunch program staff will follow the school's Delinquent Account Meal Charge Procedures to alert parents and inform them that the school may use collection efforts to pay for the provided meals.