

**Dickinson Independent School District
MEAL CHARGE AND COLLECTION POLICY / PROCEDURE
2020-2021**

TEXAS-HB3562 - CHARGE POLICY

When a school district allows students to use prepaid accounts to purchase school meals, the district must establish a grace period during which a student is able to charge meals after the prepaid funds are exhausted. The school district must also notify the student's parent or guardian that the student's account balance is exhausted. The district is not allowed to charge a fee or interest in connection with meals purchased by the students during the grace period. When the school district notifies the student's parent or guardian that the student has a negative balance, the district may set a repayment schedule for the meal charges.

GOALS:

- ◆ All communication regarding unpaid meal balances will be directed to parents or guardians through 8th grade. If a student asks about his or her meal account balance, Food Service staff will communicate with the student discreetly.
- ◆ To treat all students with dignity about their meal account in the serving line.
- ◆ To establish a consistent district policy regarding meal charges and collection.

Policy Communication: Ensure this policy is provided in writing to all households at the start of each school year and to households that transfer to the school during the school year. It also must be provided to all school staff that may assist students in need. Policy will also be included in student handbooks and the Dickinson ISD and Food & Nutrition websites.

PROCESS AND PROCEDURE: MEAL CHARGE POLICY FOR ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, JR. H, AND H.S.

| Grace Period 'Regular Meal' Charges | Notifications to Parent or Guardian Of Meal Account Balances | Procedure when Grace Period & Meal Charges are Exhausted | Principal Assistance | Grace Period Meal Charges Depleted |
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| District will allow a Grace Period of 10 meal charges. | Parent: School Messenger Reminders <i>weekly</i> . When account balance is negative, an automated call and an email will occur and continue until the meal account has a positive balance, and/or the household has applied and been approved for Free or Reduced Meal Benefits. | If the Grace Period is exhausted and meal charges have not been paid then FNS will send a U.S. Postal letter to the parent to remind them we have been feeding your child in good faith, and that money is owed. Automatic calls and emails will continue to the parent phone number on file with the district. | If after being notified by mail and FNS has not received payment managers will contact their school Principal to make contact with the parent. The school office will proceed as warranted. | Parent is expected to pay charges promptly. Until charges are paid the parent will be expected to send a lunch to school <u>so your child does not do without a meal or apply for the Free/Reduced meal benefit.</u> |

If charges occur before the meal application is approved then charges must be paid as accrued.

Parents may elect to deny their children charge privileges. In this event, the request will be notated in the student's account. Every effort is made to feed our students. Persistence in collection of owed monies is actively pursued.

All students are assigned a personal Student ID # when enrolled. All students have their own account and money may be deposited into their account at any time during school hours or online using *Lunch Money Now*.

Parents can check a student balance and eating habits by using *Lunch Money Now*, or by contacting the school cafeteria manager or by calling the FNS office at 281-229-6184 or cvincent@dickinsonisd.org.

REMINDERS –

- * Checks returned for insufficient funds will not be accepted for future payments. Cash, a money order, or using *Lunch Money Now* will be your payment options.
- * Charges accrued before application approval **must be paid**.
- * Credit Card Online Payment for Student Meals – *Lunch Money Now* <http://www.dickinsonisd.org> (\$2.50 transaction fee per transaction)
- * Parents are encouraged to set up a 'Low Balance Notice' through *Lunch Money Now*.
- * Students at ALL SCHOOLS will be offered a Free Breakfast daily. All Students are Encouraged to eat Breakfast at School to enhance learning in the classroom.
- * Reduced Meal Payment of \$.40 for lunch is eliminated for 2020-2021 school year.
- * Checks are not accepted the last two weeks of school.

Revisions to the charge policy will be updated and posted online at Dickinson ISD website as TDA/USDA makes available.

Nondiscrimination statement reads as follows: In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, and reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible State or local Agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information is available in languages other than English. To file a complaint alleging discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 fax: (202) 690-7442; or email: program.intake@usda.gov.

Revised August 2020 Distribution: Written format to households, Website, Principals, Teachers, FNS and Student Handbook. This institution is an equal opportunity provider. Board Approved