

**I. Purpose of the Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to communicate to households how the DISD Food and Nutrition Services department will provide meals to students when they have a zero or negative balance in their accounts and do not have monies to pay for a meal at the point of service. The goals of this standard practice are:

- 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.
- To directly communicate to parents or guardians of students in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade or younger regarding unpaid meal charges.

**II. Policy Communication**

The Food and Nutrition Services department will 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 district during the school year. It must also be provided to all school staff that may assist students in need. The charge policy will also be included in student handbooks and the DISD Food and Nutrition Services website.

**III. Administration**

The process and procedure will be for all Elementary, Middle, Junior High, and High School students for handling meal account balances and charges.

- **The district will allow a grace period of 10 meal charges.**
- **Notifications to Parent or Guardian of meal account balances:**  
School Messenger system will send out reminders weekly when a student's account balance is negative. An automated call and an email will be sent weekly until the student's meal account balance has a positive balance and/or the household has applied for and been approved for free and reduced-priced meal benefits.
- **Procedure when the grace period has expired:**  
Food and Nutrition Services will send out a letter to the parent to remind them we have been feeding the student in good faith and money is owed. School Messenger calls and emails will continue to go out to the household.
- **Principal Assistance:**  
For any accounts that remain negative after communication has been sent to the household will be submitted to the campus principal. The campus office will proceed as warranted.
- **Grace Period and meal charges depleted:**  
Parent/Guardian is expected to pay charges promptly. The Parent/Guardian will be responsible for sending a lunch daily with the student to school so that the student does not go without a meal until meal charges are paid.

**If charges occur before an application for free and reduced meals is approved, the charges must be paid.**

The district is not allowed to charge a fee or interest in connection with meals purchased by 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.

Parents may elect to deny their children charge privileges. The request will be notated in the student's account.

All students are assigned a student ID # when enrolled. All students have their own meal account and money can be deposited into their account during school hours or online using Lunch Money Now. <https://www.lunchmoneynow.com/lmndks/splash.php>

Parents can check a student's balance and meal history by using Lunch Money Now or by contacting the school cafeteria manager or calling the FNS office at 281-229-6012.

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