



*"To Build Knowledge and Skills for Success Today and Tomorrow"*

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## **Child Nutrition Program Financial Rights & Responsibilities**

**PURPOSE:** To explain how the District and its schools will notify parents regarding; payment methods, money owed for student meals and procedures for providing meals if student accounts are delinquent.

### **POLICY**

- The District and its schools follow federal and state laws and guidelines for the Child Nutrition Program.
- The District shall annually send information to parents providing qualification requirements for free/reduced price meals, payment options, and delinquent meal account procedures.

### **PROCEDURES**

- The District annually sends information about qualifying for free/reduced price meals, payment options, and delinquent meal accounts.
- The Board of Education sets student meal prices annually.
- District and/or Schools shall provide applications and/or links to online applications for free/reduced-price meals to parents.
- Students/families qualifying for free meals have no payment due from date of approved application.
- Students may qualify for reduced price meals and will be charged the federal amount from date of approved application.
- Schools provide parents with several payment options including:
  1. Online payments using debit or credit cards for one or all of their students, allocating funds to individual student accounts.
  2. Mail or hand delivery of checks, money orders, or cash to the school.
  3. All schools will apply payments to the purchase of the current day's meal first and the payment of past due accounts second.

### **Delinquent Accounts**

- Parents are responsible to fund student meal accounts.
- Schools will contact parents, on an automated system, by phone, text, email, letter or schools may ask students to take home notifications addressed to parents.
- Schools may use any of the following options or other reasonable options for student meals if a student's meal account is delinquent:

**1. Elementary students:**

- a. Overdue slips will be attached to the student's ID card and sent to the student's classroom to be handed out to the student by the teacher.
- b. Calls on delinquent accounts are continuously made to try to collect payment.
- c. Letters will be sent out informing parents of delinquent accounts.
  - Ten unpaid meals, a letter will be sent to parent/guardian.
  - Twenty unpaid meals, a certified letter will be sent to parent/guardian.
  - Thirty unpaid meals, the account may be sent to collections.
- d. All delinquent accounts at the beginning of May of the current school year will be subject to collections for payment.

**2. Middle School students:**

- a. Overdue slips will be sent home with students whose accounts are a low or negative balance.
- b. Calls on delinquent accounts are continuously made to try to collect payment.
- c. Letters will be sent out informing parent/guardian of delinquent accounts.
  - Ten unpaid meals, a letter will be sent to parent/guardian.
  - Twenty unpaid meals, a certified letter will be sent to parent/guardian.
  - Thirty unpaid meals, the account may be sent to collections.
- d. No charges allowed for extras or a la carte foods on any negative accounts or accounts with a zero balance.
- e. No charges allowed for any middle school student beginning April until the end of the year.
- f. All delinquent accounts at the beginning of May of the current school year will be subject to collections for payment.
- g. Forty-five unpaid meals may result in the student not being eligible to participate in the school lunch program.

**3. High school students:**

- a. Food service workers will inform students of delinquent accounts.
- b. Calls on delinquent accounts are continuously made to try to collect payment.
- c. Letters will be sent out informing parent/guardian of delinquent accounts.
  - Ten unpaid meals, a letter will be sent to parent/guardian.
  - Twenty unpaid meals, a certified letter will be sent to parent/guardian.
  - Thirty unpaid meals, the account may be sent to collections.
- d. No charges allowed for extras or a la carte food on any negative account or accounts with a zero balance.
- e. No charging allowed for any high school student beginning April until the end of the year.
- f. All delinquent accounts at the beginning of May of the current school year will be subject to collections for payment.

- g. Forty-five unpaid meals may result in the student not being eligible to participate in the school lunch program.
4. **Long-Term Payment Plans:** Long-term payment plans for households struggling to pay back a negative balance will be established between school food administration and parent/guardian. Unpaid meal charges may be carried over at the end of the school year (i.e., beyond June 30) as a delinquent debt and collection efforts may continue into the new school year. This allows the school food administration to work with individual families to establish longer repayment plans and to continue pursuing collection efforts when children change schools within the district or move to a new school outside the district. When local officials determine further collection efforts for delinquent debt are useless or too costly, the debt must be reclassified as “bad debt.”