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MEAL CHARGE POLICY

I. PURPOSE:

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

- To treat all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts.
- To establish a consistent district policy regarding charges and collection of charges.
- To establish policies that are age appropriate.
- To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student.
- To support positive situations with district staff, district business policies, students, and parent/guardian to the maximum extent possible.

II. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

1. Food Service Department
 - Responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the school district of outstanding balances. The Food Service Department is also responsible for notifying the student's parent/guardian of low or outstanding balances.
2. School District:
 - Responsible for supporting the Food Service Department in collection activities.
3. Parent/Guardian:
 - Responsible for immediate payment.

III. POLICY

1. Free and Reduced Lunch Students
 - a. Free lunch status students will not be allowed to have a negative account balance. Free lunch status allows a child to receive a free meal every day. A la Carte items are not part of the USDA program.
 - b. Reduced lunch status students will be allowed to have a negative account balance up to a maximum dollar equivalent of ten (10) reduced priced meals, which will be known as the "account cap." Reduced lunch status allows a child to receive reduced priced meals at \$0.40. A la Carte items are not allowed to be charged. Menu posted meals will be the only thing allowed to be charged.
 - c. Notices of deficit balances will be sent to parents/guardians at weekly intervals during the school year via regular US mail.
 - d. When the child reaches the "account cap," regular menu items will continue to be offered and the principal will be notified of the deficit balance. Principals are to directly communicate with parents/guardians to remedy the deficit situation.

2. All Other Students:
 - a. Elementary / Intermediate school students: will be allowed to charge up to a maximum dollar equivalent of ten (10) meals which will be known as the “account cap”. A la Carte items are not allowed to be charged. Menu posted meals will be the only thing allowed to be charged. The account cap is intended to provide meals while parents are notified of low or deficit balances and while parent payments are in transit.
3. Charging: Student Meal Accounts
 - a. Notices of deficit balances will be sent to parents/guardians at weekly intervals during the school year via regular US mail.
 - b. When the child reaches the “account cap,” regular menu items will continue to be offered and the School’s Principal will be notified of the deficit balance. Principals are to directly communicate with parents/guardians to remedy the deficit situation.
 - c. Any payments made by check that are returned to the district by the bank with notice of “insufficient funds” will require a penalty fee of \$25.00 by party writing the check
4. Account information:
 - a. The Food Service Department maintains a record of all monies deposited and spent for each student and that record will be made available to the parent upon request. The Food Service Department shall inform parents that meals can be paid for in advance and the balances maintained in their child’s account to minimize the possibility that the child may be without meal money on any given day. If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the Food Service Department will investigate the situation more closely, including contacting the parent/guardian to bring money to the school and/or encouraging the parent to apply for free or reduced price meals.
5. Block on Accounts:
 - a. A parent/guardian may contact the Food Service Department and ask to place a block on their child’s account to prohibit the purchase of a la carte items and/or set a daily dollar spending amount limit.
6. Adult Meals:
 - a. Adults will be allowed to charge up to a maximum dollar equivalent of five (5) adult meals. Once this account cap has been reached payment must be made before any other charge will be allowed.
7. End of Year:
 - a. All meal charges must be paid off at the end of the school year. Any unpaid charges will be carried forward to the next school year and count towards the student/staff’s ability to charge. Money remaining in a student/staff’s account will be carried forwards to the next school year.

Adopted: August 1, 2017