

REFERENCE COPY

FILE: EF-AP1
Critical

FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT (Meal Charges)

Unless meals are provided at no charge, the district expects students and employees to pay for meals prior to or at the time of receipt. The ability to charge meals is a privilege, not a right, and is subject to the limitations established in this procedure.

Notice

At the beginning of the school year and to students who enroll after the start of school, a copy of this procedure will be provided to every parent/guardian in their child's student handbook. A copy of this procedure will also be posted on the district's website. The district will provide parents/guardians information about free and reduced-price meals during student registration at the beginning of the year. Information about free and reduced-price school meals will be provided to parents/guardians enrolling students after the start of the year.

A copy of this procedure will also be provided to all building administrators, staff responsible for collecting payment for meals at the point of service, staff involved with notifying parents/guardians about account balances, school social workers, nurses, counselors, the district liaison for homeless children and youths, and any other staff who regularly assist students in need.

Employees

The district will withhold the amount of unpaid charges at the end of the school year from the employee's June paycheck. The district will withhold the amount of unpaid charges from the employee's final check if they leave during the school year. Employees may appeal a deduction for meal charges using the process outlined in policy DLB.

Students

1. A student may not accumulate more than \$20 in unpaid meal charges.
2. Students may not charge à la carte items.
3. A student with money in hand will not be denied a meal even if the student has past due charges.
4. Students will not be identified, singled out, shamed or punished by the district for the failure of their parents/guardians to pay for or provide meals, and the district will not withhold student records in violation of law.

Alternate Meals

The district's meal service line is designed to collect payment prior to students receiving food. If a student who has \$20 or more of unpaid meal charges and is unable to pay for meals, the student will be provided an alternate meal. Alternate meals will be available on the regular serving line. If a student has been provided a regular meal, the meal will not be taken away from the student even if the student should have been provided an alternative meal due to unpaid meal charges. If a student takes à la carte items while having a negative balance, the à la carte items will be taken from the student.

Interventions

After a student accumulates \$20 or more in meal charges or district staff becomes aware of a family having difficulty paying for meals, the district will encourage the parents/guardians to submit an application for free and reduced-price meals if an application has not been recently submitted.

District employees are mandated by the state of Missouri to report any instances of suspected abuse or neglect to the Children's Division (CD) of the Department of Social Services. District personnel will report to the CD any instance where a student's arrival at school with no provision for food leads to a reasonable cause to suspect neglect.

Working with Parents/Guardians

To ensure that parents/guardians have ample opportunity to resolve situations involving unpaid meal charges, the district will:

1. Provide notifications to parents/guardians when their child's account balances are negative. Parents/Guardians will receive phone calls and/or text messages from the school's automated parent notification system each school night.
2. Work with parents/guardians to create a payment plan that allows for the payment of accumulated balances over time.

Debt Collection

Delinquent Debt

Unpaid meal charges will be considered a delinquent debt 90 days after notice that charges are due when no payment or payment plan agreement has been made. Unpaid charges will be considered delinquent as long as the district determines the debt is collectible and efforts to collect the debt are ongoing. The district will make reasonable efforts to collect delinquent debt, including turning over

REFERENCE COPY

FILE: EF-AP1
Critical

unpaid meal charge balances to a collection agency when the superintendent or designee determines such action is in the best interest of the district. The district's Nonprofit School Food Services Account (NSFSA) funds may be used to cover the costs of reasonable efforts to collect delinquent debt, including costs associated with using a collection agency.

Bad Debt

When the district determines that collection of delinquent debt is impossible or too costly, the debt will be reclassified as bad debt. Bad debt is debt that will be written off as an operating cost. These costs must be restored using nonfederal funds. NSFSA resources may not be used to cover any costs related to bad debt. Instead, local funds will be used to cover the costs. Local funds include:

1. State revenue matching funds in excess of state revenue matching-fund requirements.
2. State and local funds provided to cover the cost of student meals.
3. Local contributions from organizations or individuals.
4. Revenue from adult meals prepared using resources outside the district's food service and not funded by the NSFSA.
5. Revenue from the sale of à la carte items and profits from foods not purchased with NSFSA funds and funded by an account separate from the NSFSA.
6. Revenues from catering or contracting services that operate from an account separate from the NSFSA.

Records

The district will maintain detailed records pertaining to delinquent and bad debt, including:

1. Evidence of efforts to collect unpaid meal charges.
2. Evidence that collection efforts fell within the time frame and methods established by this procedure.
3. Financial records showing when delinquent debt became bad debt.
4. Evidence that funds written off as bad debt were restored to the NSFSA from nonfederal sources.

Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs (including the district), are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by the USDA.

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 agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact the USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (AD-3027) found online at https://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to the USDA and provide in the letter all 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 the USDA by:

1. Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250-9410;
2. Fax: 202-690-7442; or
3. E-mail: program.intake@usda.gov.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

* * * * *

Note: The reader is encouraged to review policies and/or forms for related information in this administrative area.

Implemented:

Clark County R-I School District, Kahoka, Missouri