

535 MEAL CHARGE POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The Purpose of this policy is ensure that students receive healthy and nutritious meals through the school district's nutrition program and that school district employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. The policy of the school district is to provide meals to students in a respectful manner and to maintain the dignity of students by prohibiting lunch shaming or otherwise ostracizing the student. The policy seeks to allow students to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day and minimize identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals as well as to maintain the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. Wheaton Area Schools recognizes the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide breakfast and lunch for their children. Proper nutritional intake is essential for adequate learning to occur.
- B. It is the policy of the Wheaton Area Schools to offer breakfast and lunch. The Food Service Department strives to produce quality meals at a reasonable cost.
- C. Students may purchase meals when funds have been deposited into their student account or by cash payment.
- D. Households may apply for free/reduced meals anytime during the school year. Applications are mailed to all households in the school district prior to the school year and are included in enrollment packets. In addition, applications are available at the District, High School and Elementary School Offices.

III. PROCEDURES FOR NOTIFYING FAMILY OF ACCOUNT STATUS

- A. The school district will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low or fall below zero.
- B. The method for notifying the parent/guardian of children in grades K-5 will be an e-mail from the JMC Student Information System and a letter sent home with the student. A follow-up letter will be mailed if necessary.
- C. An e-mail from the JMC Student Information System will be sent to the parent/guardian for students in grades 6-12.
- D. When the account is negative a letter will be mailed to the parent/guardian and a second e-mail from the JMC Student Information System will be sent to the parent/guardian. Prompt payment is expected after notification.

- E. If the student account reaches a negative (\$30.00), students will receive an alternative meal that meets federal and state requirements.
- F. A student with an outstanding meal charge debt will be allowed to purchase a meal if the student pays for the meal when it is received.
- G. Bills may be turned over to a collection agency and/or filing in civil court may be pursued at the discretion of the District, if timely payment is not made.
- H. Assistance from the County Social Services may be requested by the school for possible neglect when above procedures are unsuccessful.

IV. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

- A. This policy and any pertinent supporting information shall be provided in writing (i.e., mail, email, back-to-school packet, student handbook, etc.) to:
 - 1. all households at or before the start of each school year;
 - 2. students and families who transfer into the school district, at the time of enrollment; and
 - 3. all school district personnel who are responsible for enforcing this policy.
- B. The school district will post this policy on the school district's website, or the website of the organization where the meal is served, in addition to providing the required written notification described above.