

## MEAL CHARGES

In accordance with state and federal law, the *Indianola Community School District* adopts the following policy to ensure school district employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. The policy seeks to allow students to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day, prevent the overt identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals, and maintain the financial integrity of the nonprofit school nutrition program.

### **Meal Accounts and Payment of Meals**

Students have use of a prepaid meal account. All meal accounts are family accounts, one account per family Pre-K through 12. To disseminate account balance information, the district will use an email notification system. The system will be used to notify all accounts K-12.

The district setting email for notifications is:

Tier 1: \$10.00 per student. This setting may be increased by the parent to any amount up to \$99.00. The emails go out when the threshold is broken and any day there is activity on the account.

Tier 2: \$5.00 per student warning that account balance is critically low. If a family breaks the charging threshold set in this policy, the student could be denied a meal. Tier 2 notices are sent every weekday until a deposit is made.

In addition to email notifications, elementary students will receive a weekly statement if their balance is below the threshold.

Middle school and high school students will have access to a “balance checker” that will allow them to scan an ID card to get their lunch account balance prior to entering the meal service line.

Students who qualify for free meals shall never be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from previous purchases. Students with outstanding meal charge debt shall be allowed to purchase a meal if the student pays for the meal when it is received.

Kindergarten students receiving special milk may charge up to the \$25.00, which is included in the family limit.

Parents may pay online or send a check or cash to school for payment of their lunch account.

### **Negative Account Balances**

The school will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low. Additionally, the school district will make reasonable efforts to collect meal charges classified as delinquent debt.

Families will be notified of an outstanding negative balance as follows:

#### Grades Kindergarten – Eighth

Parents may charge up to \$25.00 meals (Lunch and Breakfast). No ala carte or extra milk may be charged.

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When a K-8 student's account is in arrears by \$25.00, and the parent/guardian does not make payment to the nutrition account, the Food Service Department will provide milk or juice for breakfast and a cheese sandwich and milk for lunch. Payment for these items will not be charged to the student's account.

### Grades Ninth – Twelfth

No charge to a family account will be allowed.

When a student's account is in \$0.00, and the parent/guardian does not make a payment to the nutrition account, the Food Service Department will provide milk or juice for breakfast and a cheese sandwich and milk for lunch. Payment for these items will not be charged to the student's account.

### Employees

Employees may use a lunch account for meals, but may not charge.

Families will be notified of an outstanding negative balance. Negative balances will be carried over to the following school year. These negative balances must be taken care of prior to the start of the school year as part of the school registration process.

Balances in excess of \$25.00 may be placed in collections.

Parents with accounts in collections will be asked to send a lunch from home until negative balances have been taken care of or a payment schedule has been arranged and adhered to. A payment schedule not adhered to will be pursued. Options to pursue accounts in collections may include: collection agencies, small claims court, or any other legal method allowed by Iowa law.

### **Communication of the Policy**

The policy and supporting information regarding meal charges shall be provided in writing to:

- All households at or before the start of each school year;
- Students and families who transfer into the district, at time of transfer; and
- All staff responsible for enforcing any aspect of the policy.

Records of how and when the policy and supporting information was communicated to households and staff will be retained.

The superintendent may develop an administrative process to implement this policy.

Approved: June 19, 2017