



USD 232 Unpaid Meal Charges Policy

The district's meal charging requirements are as follows.

A charge account for students paying full or reduced price for meals may be established with the district. Students may charge no more than five meals to this account. Charging of a la carte or extra items to this account will not be permitted. Adults will not be allowed to charge meals or a la carte items.

Any student failing to keep his/her account solvent as required by the district shall not be allowed to charge further meals until the negative account balance has been paid in full. However, such students will be allowed to purchase a meal if the student pays for the meal when it is received. Students will not be allowed to purchase a la carte items with a negative meal account balance. Students who have charged the maximum allowance to this account and cannot pay out of pocket for a meal will be provided an alternate meal consisting of a whole wheat American cheese sandwich with low-fat white milk.

In the instance a student receives an alternate meal for three consecutive days or has a habitual negative account balance, the supervisor will work with building administration to determine if the family may be in need of additional assistance such as payment plans, free and/or reduced meals application, or other resources.

At least one written warning shall be provided to a student and his/her parent or guardian prior to denying meals for exceeding the district's charge limit. If payment of the negative balance is not received by the time a student leaves USD 232 (i.e., graduation, transfer out of district), the debt shall be considered bad debt for the purposes of federal law concerning unpaid meal charges.

Payments for school meals may be made at the school or district office or online. Students, parents, and guardians of students are encouraged to prepay meal costs.

The district will provide a copy of this unpaid meal charges policy to all households at or before the start of school each year and to families and students that transfer into the district at the time of transfer. The terms of this policy will also be communicated to all district staff responsible for enforcing any aspect of the policy. Records of how and when it is communicated to households and staff will be retained.

BOE Approved 10/2005; 01/2008; 04/2017; 07/2022

USD 232 Student Nutrition Department Meal Account Management Guidelines

Students may charge no more than five meals to their account. After five meal charges, a student will be offered a whole wheat American cheese sandwich with low-fat white milk at no charge. No meal will be taken away from a student. Charging of ala carte items, doubles, or extra milk/juice is not permitted. In an effort to collect unpaid meal charges, students will not be able to purchase ala carte items with a negative account.

Adults

Adults will not be permitted to charge meals or ala carte items at any time.

Meal Payment

Payments for school meals may be made at the school or online through E-Funds. Students, parents, and guardians of students are encouraged to prepay meal costs.

Elementary Students

1. When account balances reach \$10.00, the building cashier will notify parents/guardians of account balance (via printed statement, email, or phone call).
2. When a student's account holds a negative balance, the building cashier will make phone calls to the parent/guardian to notify and arrange payment options. Phone calls will continue to be made each day the student's account holds a negative balance. Building cashiers will note on call log.

Middle/High School Students

1. Building cashiers will verbally remind students of their lunch account balance daily as they come through the service line. Building cashiers may also choose to send email (printed) notices or make phone calls to parents/guardians when account balances are negative.
2. When a student's account holds a negative balance, the student may charge up to five meals. All ala carte items will be discreetly removed from a student's tray if he/she comes through the line and the cashier will give a brief explanation so as to not embarrass the student.

Alternate Meals

1. Any student failing to keep his/her account solvent as required by the district shall not be allowed to charge further meals until the negative account balance has been paid in full. However, such students will be allowed to purchase a meal if the student pays for the meal when it is received. Students who have charged the maximum allowance to this account and cannot pay out of pocket for a meal will be provided a whole wheat American cheese sandwich with 1% milk. The alternate meal will be provided before lunch to appear as a sack lunch. Parents/guardians will be contacted via email or phone before the lunch period when a student is offered the alternate meal. Additionally, building administration and the Director of Student Nutrition will be informed of this event. ***No meal will be taken away from a student.***
2. In the instance a student receives an alternate meal for 3 consecutive days or has a habitual negative lunch balance, the Director of Student Nutrition building administration to determine if the family may be in need of additional assistance such as payment plans, free and/or reduced meals application, or other resources.

Debt Collection

Student's accounts, whether there is a positive or negative balance will roll over to the next school year. The Student Nutrition Department will actively continue to strategize with parents/guardians ways to bring the student's meal account out of the negative. If the debt is not paid by the time the student leaves USD 232 (i.e., graduates, transfers), it shall be considered bad debt for the purposes of federal law concerning unpaid meal charges.