

Business OperationsMeal Charge Policy

It is the policy of the District to comply with the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program and all other federal grant programs that provide free or reduced meals to qualifying students.

Student Eligibility

Families of students who may be eligible for free or reduced price school meals should submit an application to determine their eligibility. Applications are available through the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee. As long as an application is submitted on or after July 1, the application will be considered current for the new school year. A student may become eligible for free or reduced meals at any time during the school year if the household experiences a change in financial circumstances.

Meal Account Balances

The District will ensure that families can check their meal account balances in a manner other than exclusively online. The District will ensure that at least one form of meal account payment is free of charge.

The District encourages families to pre-pay without charge for free or reduced price meals. Notwithstanding the option to pre-pay, students and families will have a method to add funds during the school day. Any balance remaining in a pre-paid account shall carry over into the next month. Households approved for free or reduced price meals with funds remaining in their meal account at the end of the school year shall receive a refund. When a student leaves the District or graduates, the District shall attempt to contact the student's household to return any funds remaining in the student's meal account.

Unpaid meal charges may be carried over at the end of the school year as a delinquent debt and the District shall undertake reasonable collection efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt, pursuant to and in compliance with state and federal law. The District shall maintain records of its collection efforts and, once delinquent meal charges are converted to bad debt, its documentation establishing and handling of the bad debt.

The District will not use a debt collection agency to collect or attempt to collect, directly or indirectly, debts due or assessed to be owed for outstanding debts on a school lunch or breakfast account of any student. Nor will the District assess or collect any interest, fees, or other monetary penalties for outstanding debts on a school lunch or breakfast account of any student.

Student Confidentiality

The District will disclose individual student eligibility information only to those persons (and organizations) who require the information in order to carry out an activity specifically authorized by the National School Lunch Act, subject to applicable legal exceptions.

The District shall not use or implement any colored or coded meal cards, tickets, tokens, or other methods of payment that would overtly identify a student as being eligible for free or reduced price meals.

Distribution Annually

This policy shall be provided or made available to all students' households at the start of each school year and to households transferring to the District during the school year.

This policy shall also be provided annually to District staff members responsible for the enforcement of this policy, including food service professionals.

The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee shall maintain documentation of the annual distribution of this policy to students' households and District staff.

Legal Reference: Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 1751);
U.S.D.A. Memorandum SP 57-2016.
LB 1329 (2024)

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