

## MEAL CHARGES

In accordance with state and federal law, the United 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.

### **Payment of Meals**

Students have use of a meal account. When the balance reaches negative \$100.00 a student may charge no more than \$50.00 to this account. When an account reaches this limit, a student shall not be allowed to charge further meals or a la carte items until the negative account balance is paid. Families can make payments towards lunch through [www.payschools.com](http://www.payschools.com) or with cash or check to the school office. Families with individual negative balances exceeding negative \$150.00 may set up a payment plan with the approval of the Business Manager and Superintendent, which may allow them to purchase school meals as long as they are current on the established payment plans.

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 or the student will receive a reimbursable alternative meal of a sandwich, milk and fruit.

Employees will have use of a meal account. Money must be put into this account and the negative balance cannot exceed \$15.00.

### **Negative Account Balances**

The school district will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low. Additionally, the school district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. The school district will coordinate communications with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Families will be notified of an outstanding negative balance once the negative balance reaches \$10.00 per student. Families will be notified via a note sent home with the student or email from the school district. Once a negative balance reaches \$25.00 per student, a letter will be mailed home detailing the negative balance. Negative balances of more than \$50.00 per student, not paid prior to 1<sup>st</sup> of the month will be turned over to the superintendent or superintendent's designee for collection. Options may include: collection agencies, small claims court, or any other legal method permitted by law.

Negative lunch balances will be provided to the board as part of the monthly financial reports. This will include account statuses, but student names will be omitted from the report.

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### **Communication of the Policy**

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

- All households and staff 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.

Legal Reference: 42 U.S.C. §§ 1751 *et seq.*  
7 C.F.R. §§ 210 *et seq.*  
U.S. DEP'T OF AGRIC., SP 46-2016, UNPAID MEAL CHARGES: LOCAL MEAL CHARGE POLICIES (2016).  
U.S. DEP'T OF AGRIC., SP 47-2016, UNPAID MEAL CHARGES: CLARIFICATION ON COLLECTION OF DELINQUENT MEAL PAYMENTS (2016).  
U.S. DEP'T OF AGRIC., SP 57-2016, UNPAID MEAL CHARGES: GUIDANCE AND Q&A (2016).  
Iowa Code 283A.  
281 I.A.C. 58.

Cross Reference: 710.1 School Food Program  
710.2 Free or Reduced Cost Meals Eligibility  
710.3 Vending Machine

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