

Ottawa Elementary School District #141 Unpaid Meal Charge Policy

Policy:

Policy for Students with Insufficient Funds for School Meals and Delinquent Accounts in the School Nutrition Program (aka Meal Charge Policy OR Unpaid Meal Charge Policy).

Regulations:

2 CFR Part 200 Section 143 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.

The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs are integral in ensuring that students have access to nutritious meals to support their academic success. It is also imperative to protect the financial stability of school nutrition program.

The intent of this policy is to establish a process and procedure to handle situations when children eligible for reduced-price or full-price meal benefits have insufficient funds to pay for school meals; as well as for the collection of unpaid meal charges and delinquent account debt.

Requirement:

All school food authorities (SFAs) must develop a written policy for children eligible for reduced-price or full-price meals that do not have money to pay for meals at the time of service and communicate the policy to all students and households by the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year.

- 1.a Students who qualify for free meals will not be denied a reimbursable meal even if they have accrued a negative balance on their cafeteria account.
- 1.b Students who have money to pay for a reduced-price or full price meal at the time of service must be provided a meal. If the student intended to use the money for that day's meal, the SFA will not use the money to repay a negative balance or other unpaid meal charge debt.
- 1.c Students without funds to pay for a reduced-price or full price meal are allowed to charge Breakfast and Lunch. Parents are responsible for covering the cost of these meals.
- 1.d Students are allowed to charge up to 5 meals, Parents are responsible for all charged meals.
- 1.e Students who charge a meal will receive a reimbursable meal.
- 1.f Households will be offered Free/Reduced lunch applications throughout the year as deemed necessary by SNP office staff.

Requirement:

The policy must be communicated to all students and households by the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year. SFAs must document methods of communicating the policy to households and training of staff responsible for policy enforcement.

Communicating the Policy

- 2.a The written meal charge policy will be communicated to the household by posting on the OES district website, included in the student information packet distributed on the first day of school and to all transfer students during the school year, and attaching to the Meal Benefits Application.
- 2.b The written meal charge policy will be communicated to all division staff prior to the first day of school.
- 2.c Child Nutrition Program staff will receive training on meal charge policy and record of training will be maintained as part of the professional development portfolio.
- 2d. Documentation of the communication and training plan will be maintained for the Federal Program Administrative Review.

Notifying the Household of Low or Negative Balance in Student Cafeteria Account

- 3.a The student's household will be notified when a student's cafeteria account falls below \$7.00
- 3.b The SFA will notify households of low or negative balances at a minimum of twice weekly. Households will be notified via e-mail, as well as, with hard notices sent home with the student.
- 3.c Notifications to households will include the amount of unpaid meal charges, expected payment dates, the consequences of non-payment and where to go for questions or assistance.
- 3.d The consequences of non-payment will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.e The persons responsible for managing unpaid meal charges are:
 - a. SNP school-based staff will collect payment for meals in the school building office.
 - b. SNP school offices will contact households regarding negative balances.
 - c. Nutrition Director will contact households if SNP school offices are not successful with collections.
 - d. District business manager will determine how/when to proceed with the collection process if all other options are unsuccessful.

Requirement:

Collection of delinquent meal charge debt must also be included in the written meal charge policy.

Delinquent debt is allowable in the School nutrition program and may be carried over to one successive school year.

Bad debt is defined as delinquent debt that is deemed uncollectible at the end of the school year. Bad debt is unallowable in the SNP and cannot be carried over to the next school year. Funds resulting from bad debt cannot be recovered using SNP funds and must be offset by non-federal sources.

- 5.a. At the end of the school year, the SNP Director and the Finance Director will evaluate all delinquent debt for conversion to bad debt. Bad debt will be restored to the SNP from the general fund prior to the end of the same fiscal year.
- 5.b Efforts to collect delinquent and/or bad debt will be handled by:
 - a. School SNP-- Send First and Second Letters

- b. School office SNP--Phone calls
- c. SFA Director of Nutrition-- Notice of Adverse Action/potential collections
- d. SFA Business Manager--Consequence

Assistance to Households

Households with questions or needing assistance may contact the School Nutrition Program office:

Mrs. Vicki McConnell, CDM, Director of Nutrition
701 E. McKinley Road
Ottawa, IL 61350
815-313-3930
vmcconnell@oes141.org

Collection procedures for Delinquent and Bad Debt- Adverse Action

(School division will determine local policy for recovering debt through a collection process. Funds from the SFA account may be used to pay for costs associated with a collection agency.)

- 6.a. When a household has reached threshold of 5 number or meals and/or (\$12.00), collection procedures may be initiated. Students will not be denied a meal, however, meals provided will continue to accrue to the student's account.
- 6.b. Household will receive a Notification/Notice of Adverse Action stating collection procedures have begun.
- 6.c. Non-Federal funds, such as donations to the district, may be used to cover the unpaid charges on student accounts and will be determined on a case by case basis.

(Policy created in house)

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