

5500 FOOD SERVICES**5506 Individual Food Service Accounts**

Individual accounts shall be assigned to each student for accounting purposes for the purchase of meals served in school cafeterias, which ensure the identity of each student is protected. The District shall permit students to charge a meal. When money is owed for five or more meals (breakfast or lunch), the applicable school must make at least two attempts to contact the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) and request that an application for the District's free and reduced lunch program be submitted.

This policy and any applicable administrative procedures shall be posted on the District's website; printed in the student handbooks provided to parents/guardians at the commencement of each school year or when a child enrolls in the District after the commencement of the school year; and communicated annually to building principals, food service personnel, other appropriate school staff, and contracted food service providers and personnel.

Collection of Unpaid Meal Charges -

Reasonable efforts shall be made by the District to collect unpaid meal charges from parents/guardians. Efforts taken in the collection shall not have a negative impact on the student involved, but shall focus on the parents/guardians responsible for providing funds for meal purchases. All communications regarding money owed for meals must be made to the student's parent(s) or guardian(s), and not the student. Provided, however, that the student's parent or guardian may be contacted by means of a letter addressed to the parent or guardian that is sealed, delivered by the student, and marked "confidential -to be opened by addressee only."

A student who cannot pay for a meal or who has a negative account balance may not be publicly identified or stigmatized. A student who cannot pay for a meal or who has a negative account balance may not be required to perform chores or other work to pay for the meal (this prohibition shall not apply if chores or other work are required of all students regardless of the student's inability to pay for a meal or negative account balance). A student may not be required to discard a meal after it was served to the student due to the student's inability to pay for the meal or the amount of money owed for prior meals.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative procedures to control school meal accounts. Said administrative procedures shall be adhered to cooperatively by the District and the Food Service Management Company.

Administrative procedures should include the following:

1. Procedures for collecting money for individual student accounts which ensure the identity of each student is protected if required by FERPA or other applicable laws.
2. The Method in which parents/guardians are notified when the student's account reaches a negative balance of five dollars (\$5.00), so that the parents/guardians can add additional funds to the account.
3. Procedures for providing students with meals when the student forgets or loses his/her money or when his/her account has insufficient funds. A student's parents/guardians shall be notified in writing when the student's account reaches a negative balance of thirty dollars (\$30.00), with said notice to include a description of the potential legal consequences for the parents/guardians if the account balance is not paid in full **and notify the parents guardians that if greater than \$50.00 is owed in a school year for school meals and the student is not eligible for participation in the District's free and reduced lunch program, the student may be provided with an alternative meal until such time as the unpaid balance is paid in full or a payment plan has been established (and is complied with) to pay the unpaid balance.**
4. When a student's account reaches a negative balance, he/she shall not be permitted to charge ala carte items or second meals/extras, but an ala carte item or second meal/extra shall not be denied to a student who has cash to pay for it.
5. A student that requests a reimbursable meal (i.e. the same meal that is available to other students for breakfast and lunch) may not be denied the reimbursable meal, regardless of whether the student has money or a negative account balance, unless:
 - A. The student's parent or guardian has provided a written directive to the school to withhold the meal. If such a written directive to withhold meals is not provided, any reimbursable meal requested by a student shall be provided to the student and charged to the student's account. If a parent/guardian has not issued a written directive to withhold meals and desires to prevent additional charges to the account, he/she should send a meal to school with the child and instruct the child not to request a reimbursable meal (if a reimbursable meal is still requested by the child, it must be provided and will be charged to the student's account). In the event a parent or guardian issues a written directive to withhold meals, and the parent's/guardian's directive results in an associated deprivation of food that constitutes "child abuse," as this term is defined via Policy 7020 and applicable law, the incident of child abuse shall be reported pursuant to Policy 7020 and applicable law.

OR

- B. The student is not eligible for participation in the District's free and reduced program and greater than \$50.00 is owed in a school year for school meals.

In such case, the student may be provided with an alternative meal until such time as the unpaid balance is paid in full or a payment plan has been established (and is complied with) to pay the unpaid balance.

6. Accounts shall be reviewed at least annually.
7. Procedures for collecting past due meal accounts shall include, but are not limited to, appropriate legal action and other means authorized by law. When the District's Superintendent or his/her designee determines the delinquent debt is uncollectible and no further collection efforts will be made, the debt shall be reclassified as bad debt and shall be written off as operating losses. Once a delinquent debt is reclassified as bad debt, a transfer of funds for the amount of the debt will occur (prior to end of the school year during which the debt is reclassified as bad debt) into the food service account from non-federal sources because bad debts are an unallowable cost to the food service account. Only debt that is actively being pursued can be carried into the subsequent school year.

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Legal Reference	-	24 P.S. §13-1337
Cross Reference	-	Policy 5501, 5505, 5510, 7020, and 10615