

MEAL CHARGES

In accordance with state and federal law, the Bellevue 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 \$0 a student(s) may charge no more than \$10.00 or 4 meals to this family account per person in the family. When an account is negative, a student shall not be allowed to charge a la carte items. Parents and students are made aware of this through an email and letter home, and payments may be made through an online option with the student information system (JMC) utilizing PaySchools Online Payment System or pay through a check or money being brought to the school office.

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. The school district will provide the main entree and milk for students who have charged the maximum allowance to the student account and cannot pay out of pocket for a meal.

Employees may use a charge account for meals, but may charge no more than \$10 to this account. When an account reaches this limit, an employee shall not be allowed to charge further meals or a la carte items until the negative account balance is paid.

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 balance reaches \$10.00. Families will be notified by a phone call and/or letter sent home at this time, but also through an email when accounts are lower than \$20.00. Negative balances of more than \$50.00, not paid prior to the end of the semester 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.

Approved June 2017

Reviewed July 2019

Revised July 2023

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Communication of the Policy

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

- All households 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
U.S. Dep't of Agric., SP 47-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments.
U.S. Dep't of Agric., SP 57-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q&A.
Iowa Code 283A. 281 I.A.C. 58.

Cross Reference: 710.1 School Nutrition Services
710.2 Free or Reduced Cost Meals Eligibility
710.3 Vending Machines