

MEAL CHARGE POLICY

In accordance with state and federal law, the Eddyville-Blakesburg-Fremont Community School District adopts the following policy to ensure school district employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. It is the policy of the District to not shame students at meal service. The policy seeks to allow students to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day and prevent the overt identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals.

Payment of Meals

The District encourages parents and guardians to keep meal account balances current. The District does understand that there can be extenuating circumstances and encourages the parent/guardian to contact the District to make payment arrangements should the need arise.

Students who qualify for free meals shall never be denied a reimbursable meal even if they have accrued a negative balance from previous purchases.

When an account reaches a negative balance, a student shall not be allowed to charge a la carte items until the negative account balance is paid. Payments may be made electronically, or brought in, or mailed to the school office.

Employees may use a charge account for meals, but may charge no more than \$10.00 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 District makes reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low. Additionally, the District will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. The District will work with individual families to collect unpaid account balances, but when all avenues have been exhausted and the debt is still unpaid, the District may use its discretion in pursuing legal action to collect the unpaid balance.

Donations

Donations may be made to the school meal program. The account(s) to which the donation will be applied may be specified by the donor.

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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.

NOTE: The IASB sample policy is drafted to be consistent for all grade levels. However, local boards may vary the meal charge policy for elementary, middle, and high schools. Districts should update the policy accordingly if they wish to delineate meal charge practices based on the grade level of students.

NOTE: If the district elects to provide alternate meals for students, the alternate meal must contain components available to all students and be provided in the same manner as meals are provided to other students. Additionally, the district is expected to accommodate special dietary needs when a child's disability restricts their diet.

NOTE: The Iowa Department of Education has tools and resources available to help districts with the school nutrition program and meal charge policy implementation and review. Please visit the "[School Meals](#)" section of the Iowa Department of Education's website.

NOTE: School districts must follow appropriate debt collection practices when trying to recover unpaid meal charges.

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

Approved _____

Reviewed _____

Revised _____