

Unpaid Meal Charge and Debt Collection Procedure

I. Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to establish consistent district practices for the provision of meals to students who have insufficient funds in their school meal accounts, as well as the collection of unpaid meal debt.

II. General Statement of Procedure

- A. Mounds View Schools' goal is to provide nutritious meals to students to promote healthy eating habits and enhance learning, as well as maintain the financial integrity of the National School Breakfast and Lunch program and eliminate stigmatization of children who are unable to pay meal charges.
- B. Mounds View Schools offers breakfast and lunch meals at each school that meet state and federal guidelines.
- C. Students may purchase meals when funds have been deposited into their meal account via cash, check or online payments.
- D. Households may apply for educational benefits (free/reduced-price meal benefits) anytime during the school year. Beginning August 1, applications are available to complete online at www.moundsviewschools.org. Paper applications are available at the district office, all school offices and in the cafeterias during meal service. If household income or size of the family changes, families can apply for meal benefits anytime during the school year.
- E. The responsibility for ensuring that students can participate in meal service is that of the parents or guardians. The responsibility of the district is ensuring that students have a school meals program available to them.

III. Charge Procedure

- A. It is Mounds View Schools' procedure that if the student account has insufficient funds to pay for breakfast and/or lunch meals, a student will still be allowed to purchase a reimbursable meal, which will cause the account balance to become negative.
 - All students will be provided a meal regardless of meal account status. While the district is under no legal obligation to do so, we believe it is in best interest of the student.
 - Students who choose to purchase a carton of milk or an extra hot entrée without funds in their meal account will be charged. Mounds View Nutrition Services staff

will not remove any extra hot entrée from a student's reimbursable meal tray, or prohibit a student from purchasing milk.

- Students who have negative account balances from the current school year or a previous school year, will not be allowed to charge ala carte items, such as bottle beverages, snacks etc., until the student has sufficient funds in their meal account.

IV. Notification of Account Status

Mounds View Schools utilizes several methods to notify households of negative meal balances. The following communications will be focused on parents rather than the students.

- A. Families can set up low balance email alerts and automated payments when their child's meal account balance reaches a certain amount via Titan Family Portal (family.titank12.com/)
- B. Mounds View Schools will send daily automated emails to all parents/guardians when an account balances reaches -\$0.01.
- C. School Administration
 - It is important to recognize that everyone involved in the discussion at this level has the best interest of students in mind and that each family situation is unique.
 - The District Office Nutrition Services team will send an email to the students School Administrative team to inform them that help is needed to address overdue funds when meal account balances reach -\$30.00.
 - The School Administrative team will work together to develop a solution to unpaid school lunch accounts. A team approach is critical to identifying the scope of the debt as well as identifying ways to address the debt in a long-term, sustainable manner.

V. Collection of Unpaid Meal Debt

- A. The school district will make reasonable efforts to communicate with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Where appropriate, families will be encouraged to apply for educational benefits (free and reduced-price meals) for their children.
- B. The school district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent.
- C. Families of active students with a negative balance will carry over into the next school year.

VI. Donations and account refunds

- A. If a student is graduating or moving out of the District, families should complete a “Request for Refund-Nutrition Services” form if a positive balance remains in their student’s account. Families may choose to refund the money, transfer to a sibling or donate to the Nutrition Services Angel Fund.
- B. This form may be found on the Nutrition Services webpage at <https://www.moundsviewschools.org/refundrequest>.
- C. In addition to donations made on the “Request for Refund-Nutrition Services” form, donations are accepted year round. Contributions can be made at any school. Funds will be deposited into the school Angel Fund. The Angel Fund is a fund designated for students experiencing financial hardship, or a need is presented to use Angel Fund money to clear a student’s negative account balance.
- D. The decision to use Angel Fund money for student meal accounts is determined by the Nutrition Services Supervisor.

VII. Accountability

- A. This procedure will be distributed to households annually via the online annual update and the Nutrition Services website.
- B. This procedure will be distributed annually to school and district level staff responsible for enforcement such as nutrition services, principals and their designees, nurses and other district administrators as appropriate.
- C. Schools may choose to share information about the policy with families in other communication such as student handbooks, newsletters and/or in online portals.

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