

Unpaid Meal Charge and Debt Collection Procedure

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent district practices for the provision of meals to students who have insufficient funds in their school meal accounts and 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 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 school orientation. In addition, 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.
 - i. 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.
 - ii. Students with an overdrawn account are not allowed to charge ala carte items.

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 when their student's meal account balance reaches \$10.00 via Pay Pams (www.paypams.com) or Fee Pay account (<https://www.moundsviewschools.org/parentvue>)
- B. Mounds View Schools will send daily automated emails and phone calls to all parents/guardians for all students with a low balance of $-\$0.01$.
- C. School Nutrition Cashiers or District Nutrition Service Staff
 - i. The Cashier or District Nutrition Service Staff will make a phone call using the computer generated letter verbiage to the family when a student has charged 8 lunches negative.
- D. School Administration
 - i. 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.
 - ii. The Cashier will send an email to the School Administrative team to inform them that help is needed to address overdue lunch funds with account balances below $-\$30.00$.
 - iii. 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 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 students account. Families may choose to refund the money, transfer to a sibling or donated to the Nutrition Services Angel Fund.
- B. This form may be found on the Nutrition Services webpage at <https://www.moundviewschools.org/lunchmenus>
- 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 and do not qualify for meal benefits.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.