

Meal Charging Policy

In accordance with state and federal law, the Southeast Warren 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 \$0.00 a student may charge no more than \$10.00 to an individual account or \$20 to a family account. When an account reaches this limit, a student shall not be allowed to charge further meals or a la carte items until the negative account balance is paid. Money may be added to student accounts electronically through the online lunch account system or by check or cash when going through the lunch line.

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.

Employees may use a charge account for meals. When the balance reaches \$0.00 an employee may charge no more than \$10.00 to an individual account or \$20 to a family 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 by the automated lunch account system when their account reaches a threshold based on the number of students in the account and their Free/Reduced status. These warnings are sent in advance of an account reaching a negative balance, and continues until the account is paid. At the elementary buildings, notes will be sent home once a week to families with negative accounts. Negative balances of more than \$10.00 for an individual account or \$20.00 for a family account not paid prior to May 15th of each school year 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.

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.