

## **3012 School Meal Program and Meal Charges**

**Meal Program.** The school district will make a school meal program available to students. The cost of the program will be determined by the board of education so as to make the program as **self-supporting as possible**. The majority of the program will be maintained through school meal prices, along with limited funding from both federal and state entities. With board approval, the district may contract with a private company or corporation for the management and/or provision of the program.

The district will notify the families with children attending school of the current guidelines for free or reduced-price school meals. A copy of the complete regulations and procedures regarding reduced-price and free meals shall be available in the office of the superintendent.

**Meal Charge Policy.** The district will notify students and their families of the policy for **Charged Meals**, meaning meals received by a student when the student does not have money in hand or in his or her food account. This policy applies to students who receive meals at the free, reduced, or full rates.

Notice of this policy must be provided in writing to all households at the start of each school year and to households that transfer to the school during the school year. Notice may be provided through the student handbook, student registration materials, online portal used to access student accounts, direct mailing or e-mail, newsletter, the district website, and/or any other appropriate means. Notice of this policy will also be provided all school staff responsible for the enforcement of it, including food service professionals responsible for collecting payment for meals at the point of service, staff involved in notifying families of low or negative balances, and other staff involved in enforcing any aspect of this policy.

### **The district's policy on charged meals is**

If a student lacking funds to pay for a meal, the student will be provided and charged for up to five meals, or negative ten (10) dollars. Once the student(s) has a negative balance below \$0.00 they may receive a "plain" sandwich or a single trip to the "hot bar". Once a student reaches negative ten (10) dollars, if a student has no funds available to pay for a meal, no food will be provided. The district encourages families to provide a lunch from home until the lunch fund is reimbursed to above 0.00 dollars.

Students who qualify for free meals will not be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from other food purchases. School lunch staff may prohibit any students from charging a la carte or extra items if they do not have cash in hand or their account has a negative balance. In regards to lunch balances, parents will be notified from the district via email, written letter, phone call or in person. Students will not be approached about paying the account, however they will be notified that they can not make an additional charge if the account is over drawn.

If a student repeatedly lacks funds to purchase a meal, has not brought a meal from home, and is not enrolled in a free meal program, the district will use its resources and contacts to protect the health and safety of the student.

Failure or refusal of parents or guardians to provide meals for students may require mandatory reporting to child protection agencies as required by law.

### **Collection of Delinquent Meal Charge Debt**

The school district is required to make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges. The Superintendent or his or her designee will contact households about unpaid meal charges and notify them again of the availability of the free and reduced meal program and/or establish payment plans and due dates by telephone, e-mail, or other written or oral communication. If these collection efforts are unsuccessful, the school district may pursue any other methods to collect delinquent debt as allowed by law.

### **Collection efforts may continue into a new school year.**

In the event that the Nebraska Department of Education develops a state-level meal charge policy, it shall supersede that portion of this policy.

Adopted on: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised on: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed on: \_\_\_\_\_