

# **Nampa School District Meal Charge Procedure**

## **I. Federal Requirement**

The purpose of this policy is to address the need for school food authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) to institute and clearly communicate a meal charge policy, which would include, if applicable, the availability of alternate meals. Because all students in participating schools may receive reimbursable school meals, all SFAs must have a policy in place for children who are participating at the reduced price or paid rate, but either do not have money in their account or in hand to cover the cost of the meal at the time of service. Such a policy ensures that school food service professionals, school administrators, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations in these situations.

This requirement is referred to as a “policy,” but whether this is referred to as a “policy” or “standard practice” is at the discretion of the SFA. Regardless of terminology used, the policy or standard practice must consist of a written document explaining how the SFA will handle situations where children eligible to receive reduced price or paid meals do not have money in their account or in hand to cover the cost of their meal at the time of service. The policy or standard practice must be implemented throughout the SFA.

You can find more information about this US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) requirement at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/unpaid-meal-charges>.

## **II. PURPOSE OF POLICY:**

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the district. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the food service department. The goals of this standard of practice are:

- To treat all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts
- To support positive situations with district staff, district business policies, student, and parent/guardian to the maximum extent possible
- To establish policies that are age appropriate
- To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student
- To establish a consistent district policy regarding charges and collection of charges

### III. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

- The food service department is responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the student's parent/guardian. The building administrator may assist with parent notification when food service has been unsuccessful reaching the student's parent/guardian
- The Parent/Guardian: Immediate payment

### IV. ADMINISTRATION

1. Families are encouraged to apply for free and reduced priced meal benefits. Any family that falls into a negative balance will receive notification to encourage them to apply for free or reduced priced meal benefits.
2. Families are encouraged to pre-pay for meals and money is accepted in the school cafeteria daily for payments on the day of service, or online at <https://mylunchboxnampa.com/>. Written notification of prepayment options occur at the beginning of each school year, is given to each new transfer student, is posted on the Food Service website, and is included in the student handbook.
3. This policy will be posted on the Food Service Website.
4. **Elementary students:** Low account and negative account balance slips will be sent to the student's classroom to be handed out to the student by the teacher. Negative account balances will also be emailed to parent/guardian.
  - a. Calls on delinquent accounts are made on a daily basis to try to collect payment.
  - b. No charging is allowed for any student beginning April until the end of the year.
  - c. If a child has money to purchase a reduced price or paid meal at the time of the meal service, the child must be provided a meal. SFAs may not use the child's money to repay previously unpaid charges if the child intended to use the money to purchase that day's meal.
  - d. No charges are allowed for extras or a la carte foods on any negative accounts or accounts with a zero balance

5. **Middle School students:** Negative account balances will be emailed to parent/guardian.
  - a. Calls on delinquent accounts are made on a daily basis to try to collect payment.
  - b. No charges are allowed for extras or a la carte foods on any negative accounts or accounts with a zero balance.
  - c. No charging is allowed for any student beginning April until the end of the year.
  - d. If a child has money to purchase a reduced price or paid meal at the time of the meal service, the child must be provided a meal. SFAs may not use the child's money to repay previously unpaid charges if the child intended to use the money to purchase that day's meal.
  
6. **High School students:** Negative account balances will be emailed to parent/guardian.
  - a. Calls on delinquent accounts are made on a daily basis to try to collect payment.
  - b. No charges are allowed for extras or a la carte food on any negative account or accounts with a zero balance.
  - c. No charging allowed for any high school student beginning April until the end of the year.
  - d. If a child has money to purchase a reduced price or paid meal at the time of the meal service, the child must be provided a meal. SFAs may not use the child's money to repay previously unpaid charges if the child intended to use the money to purchase that day's meal.
  
7. **Denying meals and providing alternate meals:** If a student does not have fund on their account to purchase a meal, the student will be directed to the office in a discreet manner to prevent embarrassment to the child in the meal service line.

Alternate meals must come from funds outside the non-profit school foodservice account. Some building administrators may provide alternative meals for students who are unable to purchase a school meal. This is provided at the discretion of each building administrator and does not occur universally throughout the district.
  
8. **Unpaid meal charges:** May be carried over at the end of the school year (i.e., beyond June 30) as a delinquent debt and collection efforts may continue into the new school year. This allows SFAs to work with individual families to establish longer repayment plans and to continue pursuing collection efforts when children change schools within the district or move to a new school outside the district.

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U.S. Department of Agriculture  
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1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**  
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**  
[Program.Intake@usda.gov](mailto:Program.Intake@usda.gov)

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