

ALHAMBRA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICY FOR HANDLING STUDENTS WITHOUT PAYMENT

Alhambra Unified School District's Food & Nutrition Service Department recognizes adequate nutrition is essential to students' mental, physical, and academic growth. All children (grades K through grade 12) participating in the school meal programs, whether at a free, reduced, or paid rate, may receive a reimbursable meal that meets USDA requirements in compliance under the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA). Meals will be provided based on the eligibility status of the student and a student who is not eligible to receive free meals may be charged for the meal served.

First Day of School -

A student's meal eligibility is determined on a yearly basis. A student who does not have an approved status for the current year will be served reimbursable school meals based on the previous year's eligibility status for a grace period of 30 school days.

On the first day of school, students who are not yet approved or are not eligible for free or reduced-price meals per prior year status may receive a meal and the meal will be charged to their account at full price. The parent or guardian will receive an automated phone call and/or email on **Sundays** explaining the student's non-eligibility for free or reduced price meals and the unpaid meal balance incurred. Information on online application for free or reduced-price meals and online payment will be provided.

Students may use a meal card issued by the cafeteria, school ID card with barcodes, School ID numbers, or correct name to receive a meal based on the approved status.

After the First Day of School -

Students who are not eligible for free meals will continue to receive a meal and their account will be charged.

Weekly Ongoing Notice -

A weekly automated phone call and an email will be made from the Food & Nutrition Services office to those who incur a negative balance of their meal account. The call and email will be addressed to parents or guardians. The school's Home School Coordinator will assist in reaching out to those who may have a language barrier to provide information on outstanding balance and the unpaid meal policy. Information on online payment and online application will be provided.

Students who transfer from another school within the Alhambra Unified School District, and have been approved for free or reduced price meals will continue to receive meal benefits. Students who transfer from another school district need to apply for meal benefits in Alhambra Unified School District unless the District is able to directly certify the student. A student is considered in full paid status unless a meal application is approved or directly certified.

Students who have negative meal balance may be denied charging on A La Carte items.

Delinquent or unrecovered debt will not be carried over to the next school year. After Food & Nutrition Services has taken all reasonable steps to recover the unpaid meal balances (debt) and the efforts are unsuccessful, the debt is considered as bad debt. At the end of the fiscal year, General fund will transfer the total amount of bad debt to the cafeteria fund to repay the nonprofit school food service account. All negative account balance in the cafeteria account will be returned to zero in the student's meal account before the beginning of the new school year. The District may make other efforts to collect the bad debt as permitted by law.



What you should know:

Every meal is accounted for based on the eligibility status. Unpaid meals become a financial burden to the District's general fund. Schools are asked to provide assistance to communicate unpaid meal policy and to collect unpaid meal balances whenever possible.

It is the intent of related law to prohibit school personnel from denying or delaying a school meal as a way to punish a child for any reason and to establish transparent rules for resolving unpaid school meal fees owed. A pupil whose parent or guardian has unpaid meal charges shall not be shamed,

treated differently, or served a meal that differs from others.

Unpaid meal policy must be communicated in writing to families at the start of the school year or when the student attends school in the midyear.

Schools may not take any action directed at a pupil to collect unpaid meal debt, but must direct these efforts to the parent or guardian.

The law is not intended to allow for the indefinite accrual of unpaid meal fees.



Remember:

Students are to be treated with respect at all times. If the cafeteria manager/lead feels a student needs to be disciplined, he/she should contact the appropriate school official.