MEAL CHARGES

In accordance with state and federal law, the Sidney 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 5 meals to this 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. Student meal accounts may be paid via check or cash directly to either office. Debit or credit payments can be made through the PayPal system.

Students who qualify for free meals shall never be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from previous purchases. Schools are encouraged to provide a reimbursable meal to students with outstanding meal charge debt. If an alternate meal is provided, the meal must be the same meal presented in the same manner to any student requesting an alternate meal.

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 of an outstanding negative balance once the negative balance reaches $10.00. Families will be notified in multiple ways: Low and minus balances are sent home by JMC mail each week, if we have a current email address, parents may also check the online system at any time to see a balance.

Negative balances of more than $50.00 will be offered an adjusted meal that meets the state guidelines. Negative balances of more than $50.00, not paid prior to end of the school year will be turned over for collection. Options may include: collection agencies, small claims court, or any other legal method permitted by law.

Unpaid Student Meals Account
The district will establish an unpaid student meals account in a school nutrition fund. Funds from private sources and funds from the district flexibility account may be deposited into the unpaid school meals account in accordance with law. Funds deposited into this account shall be used only to pay individual student meal debt.

Communication of the Policy
The school district is required to notify parents or guardians of the availability of applications for free or reduced-price meals. First notification will be completed through the Student Handbook at registration; Second notification will accompany semester grades at the end of first semester.

The policy and supporting information regarding meal charges shall be provided in writing to:
- Student Handbook - during Registration
- First Semester Grade Card Statement - Free and Reduced lunch applications are available in the school office for families needing to apply. For students already receiving free or reduced price meals, no further action is required to continue receiving meal benefits through the end of the school year.

Legal Reference:

Cross Reference:
710.1 School Food Program 710.2 Free or Reduced Cost Meals Eligibility 710.3 Vending Machine

Approved Reviewed Revised 10/15/18