

## MEAL CHARGES

In accordance with state and federal law, the Denison 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**

All meal purchases are to be prepaid before meal service begins. Students have use of a meal account. Families may add money to student accounts via an electronic payment option found on the Denison Community School District website or pay at any school building office.

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.

Employees may use an account for meals. All meals and/or a la carte items are to be prepaid in advance. When an account does not have a positive balance, an employee shall not be allowed to charge meals or a la carte items until there is a positive balance in the account to cover the cost.

### **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 the student's parent or guardian to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Parents or guardians will be notified of an outstanding negative balance once the balance reaches any negative balance, and will continue to be notified until the account is no longer has a negative balance. Parents or guardians will be notified by a written notification sent home with the student, automated call from the District's communication system, and a call from school district personnel. A last notice letter will be mailed home when a negative lunch balance exceeds \$60 at which time the negative account 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 or superintendent's designee may develop administrative regulations for implementing this policy.

Date Board Adopted: 6/18/2013

Date Board Updated/Reviewed: 3/18/2019

Legal Reference:       42 U.S.C. §§ 1751 *et seq.*  
                              7 C.F.R. §§ 210 *et seq.*  
                              U.S. Dep't of Agric., SP 46-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal  
                              Charge Policies (2016).  
                              U.S. Dep't of Agric., SP 47-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification  
                              on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments (2016).  
                              U.S. Dep't of Agric., SP 57-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance  
                              and Q&A (2016).  
                              Iowa Code 283A.  
                              281 I.A.C. 58.