

Meal Charge Procedure:

Purpose: The purpose of this procedure is to establish consistent meal charge account procedures throughout the district. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the Nutrition Services Department. The goals of this procedure are:

- To establish a consistent district policy/procedure regarding charges and collection of charges.
- To treat all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts.
- To support positive situations with district staff, district business policies, students and parents/guardians/adult students to the maximum extent possible.
- To encourage parents/guardians/adult students to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student.
- **Scope of Responsibility:**

The Nutrition Service Department: Responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the school district of outstanding balances. The Nutrition Service Department is also responsible for notifying the student's parent/guardian/adult student of low or outstanding balances. Springfield Public Schools will notify parent/guardian/adult student of negative balance of account by email, phone or letter.

The School District: Responsible for supporting the Nutrition Service Department in collection activities.

The Parent/Guardian/Adult Student: To keep student accounts at a zero balance. If a delinquent account balance is present, the parent/guardian/adult student is required to immediately pay off the balance due. If a hardship exists the parent/guardian/adult student is required to work with the school district to set up a repayment of the delinquent account balance.

Meal Charge Procedure:

- ❖ All full paid elementary students will be allowed to charge up to a maximum dollar equivalent of two (2) lunch meals. All full paid secondary students will be allowed to charge up to a maximum dollar equivalent of one (1) lunch meal. This dollar limit will be known as the "account charge limit".
- ❖ These meals will include any reimbursable meal on the menu.
- ❖ Notice of deficit balances that are greater than one (1) dollar will be sent to parents/guardians/adult students at set times during the week. The district will notify parents/guardians/adult students by phone message (daily), email (weekly) or letter (weekly) of deficit balances greater than one (1) dollar.
- ❖ When the student reaches the "account charge limit" they will only be offered a designated alternate menu consisting of a sandwich, fruit, vegetable and choice of white milk.
- ❖ The designated alternate meal will be charged to the students account at a (0.00) zero charge. The alternate meal will be reported as a reimbursable meal to both state and federal school lunch authorities and thus will be eligible for reimbursement.
- ❖ **No student regardless of eligibility will be allowed to purchase ala –carte items if the student has a deficit balance. Students will not be able to purchase any ala carte items even if they have cash. They must pay their lunch account balance before purchasing ala carte items.**
- ❖ After (3) three consecutive alternate meals the Nutrition Services Department will personally reach out to parents/guardians/adult students to see if there is any additional assistance the department can offer the family.

Point of Sale System:

- ❖ All school cafeterias possess computerized point of sale systems that maintain a record of all monies deposited and spent for each student. If a parent/guardian/adult student would like a copy of said record they will need to contact the Nutrition Service Department. Parents can also obtain a copy of their student account transactions via their students "My Payments Plus" account.

Student Meal Account:

- ❖ Parents/guardians/adult students have the ability to place funds on two different meal options (general and meal) of their students lunch account. The "General" account will allow your student to purchase both a reimbursable

meal as well as purchase ala carte snacks. The “Meal” account will allow your student to purchase only a reimbursable meal.

- ❖ At any time parents/guardians/adult students are able to move your student’s monies on account to either option by contacting the Nutrition Service Department.

Prepayments on Student Account:

- ❖ Meals can be prepaid at any time. Prepayments can be made by check or cash presented to your child’s cafeteria. Prepayments can also be made through “My Payments Plus” by going to <https://www2.mypaymentsplus.com/> . This gives parents/guardians/adult students the capability of using their credit/debit card for purchases. There are numerous advantages to using the online system including updated account balances, email notification of low balance accounts and history of purchases made by the student.

Returned Checks:

- ❖ Checks returned for non-sufficient funds are processed through “Check Read”, a third party collection site.

Refunds of Student Accounts:

- ❖ Parents/guardians/adult students can request a refund of a student account by contacting the Nutrition Service Department. Parents/guardians/adult students are also able to transfer any funds from a graduating student to a siblings account.
- ❖ Parents/guardians/adult students may also donate any remaining funds on a student’s account to a student in need. Please contact the Nutrition Service Department for assistance.

Delinquent Debt:

- ❖ When payment is overdue, the debt is classified as delinquent as long as it is considered collectable and efforts are being made to collect.
- ❖ A debt owed to the nonprofit school food service account remains on the accounting documents until it is either collected or is determined to be uncollectable and written off.
- ❖ The debt will be carried over from year to year while the student is in the Springfield Public School District.

Bad Debt:

- ❖ When local officials determine further collection efforts for delinquent debt are useless or too costly, the debt must be reclassified as “bad debt.” Springfield Public Schools will consider a delinquent debt to become bad on June 30th of the year a student graduates for our district.
- ❖ If a student leaves the district prior to graduation, all efforts will continue to collect the delinquent debt for one year after the student leaves the district.
- ❖ If a student re-enrolls into Springfield Public School District and there is a delinquent debt on the meal account the debt will be reapplied to the students lunch account and efforts to collect the debt will continue.

Resources:

"On July 8, 2016, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) issued Policy Memoranda SP 46-2016: Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies, and SP 47-2016 Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments. These policy memos provide updated guidance addressing the need for school food authorities to institute and clearly communicate a meal charge policy which includes the availability of alternate meals, and federal policy clarification for delinquent debt and bad debt"

- ❖ SP 46-2016: *Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies, July 8, 2016*, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/unpaid-meal-charges-local-meal-charge-policies>
- ❖ SP 47-2016: *Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments, July 8, 2016*, <https://dese.mo.gov/content/unpaid-meal-charges-clarification-collection-delinquent-meal-payments>
- ❖ SP 23-2017: *Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q&A, March 23, 2017*, <https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/food/documents/SP23-2017s.pdf>

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Updated: 6/8/2017