



Rankin Independent School District

Home of the Red Devils



School District Meal Charge Policy

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.

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 Director:** Responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the student's parent/guardian.
- **Administration:** Responsible for supporting the Food Service Department in collection activities.
- **The Parent/Guardian:** Responsible for making immediate payment

IV. ADMINISTRATION OF POLICY

1. Families are encouraged to apply for free and reduced price meal benefit. Any family that falls into a negative balance will receive a written notification to encourage them to apply for free or reduced price meal benefits.
2. Families are encouraged to pre-pay for meals and money is accepted in the school office daily for payments on the day of service. Written notification of prepayment options occurs 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. Families will be notified of the school Unpaid Meal Charge Policy in writing before the school year begins and with each new transfer student. This policy will also be posted on the Rankin ISD Website – www.rankinisd.net.

a. Elementary students:

- Food Service Director will send seal letters to Elementary Administrative Assistant to distribute to home room teachers on charges: Teacher will place letters in student take-home folders to notify parents on student lunch account.
- Calls on delinquent accounts are made on a weekly basis to try to collect payment.
- 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.

- No charging allowed for any elementary school student beginning May until the end of the year.

b. Middle/High School students:

- Calls on delinquent accounts are made on a daily basis to try to collect payment.
- Food Service Director will mail out charge letters to parents on a weekly basis.
- No charges are allowed for extras or a la carte food on any negative account or accounts with a zero balance.
- No charging allowed for any Middle/High school student beginning May until the end of the year.
- 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.

4. Alternate meals will be offered for students with more than ten (10) days of charges.

- a. Students will receive an alternate meal consisting of cheese, bread, fruit, vegetable, and milk.
- b. Alternate meals will cost ½ of the price of a regular/reduced student meal; depending on what meal plan the student is under.

5. Balances owed with **no** response from Parent/Guardian: If payment is not received, the Superintendent or his/her designee may take action as is deemed appropriate to collect the debt.