

# **Whitehouse Independent School District**

## **MEAL CHARGE AND COLLECTION POLICY / PROCEDURE**

### **TEXAS-HB3562—CHARGE POLICY**

When a school district allows students to use prepaid accounts to purchase school meals, the district must establish a grace period during which a student is able to charge meals after the prepaid funds are exhausted. The school district must also notify the student's parent or guardian that the student's account balance is exhausted. The district is not allowed to charge a fee or interest in connection with meals purchased by the students during the grace period. When the school district notifies the student's parent or guardian that the student has a negative balance, the district may set a repayment schedule for the meal charges.

**Policy Communication:** Ensure this policy is provided in writing to all households at the start of each school year and to households that transfer to the school during the school year. It also must be provided to all school staff that may assist students in need. Policy will also be included in student handbooks and on the Whitehouse ISD School Nutrition website.

### **GOALS:**

- ◆ To treat all students with dignity about their meal account in the serving line.
- ◆ To establish a consistent district policy regarding meal charges and collection.

### **DISTRICT-WIDE POLICY**

#### **STUDENT:**

For all students there will be a charge limit of two days (up to \$6.00). Once the maximum amount of \$6.00 has been met, the student will be offered a low cost reimbursable meal. The low cost breakfast will consist of two grains, up to two fruits or one fruit and/or juice, and a choice of milk for all campuses. The low cost lunch will consist of a meat/meat alternate, whole grain, a choice of fruit, up to two vegetables, a dessert (if offered), and a choice of milk at Elementary, Holloway, and Jr. High campuses. The low cost lunch at Whitehouse High School will consist of a meat/meat alternate, whole grain, up to two fruits and/or vegetables, a dessert (if offered), and a choice of milk.

Every attempt will be made by the School Nutrition Department to avoid offering a low cost meal. Verbal reminders will be given discretely reminding student to bring lunch money. Charge notices will be sent by email, mail, or via take home folders to all parents in an attempt to collect and keep parents informed. The parent/guardian will receive a phone call to inform them that the student will be receiving a low cost meal until the charges are paid. There are 3 methods of payment available to parents/guardians to keep accounts current; cash, check, or payment online. If paying online, visit the Whitehouse ISD website, under Departments select School Nutrition, select School Café on the right side of the page and follow the special instructions. This site allows many conveniences such as payment online, low balance email notices, ability to view purchases, and other advantages parents/guardians may choose to use.

#### **FACULTY/STAFF:**

Faculty and Staff are allowed to charge up to \$6.00. Every attempt will be made by the School Nutrition Department to make the account whole. Faculty and staff will receive a verbal reminder by the cashier when payment is needed. School Nutrition Staff will place a personal account print-out in staff mail box regularly and/or email will be sent to notify any outstanding charges. No charges will be allowed until prior charges have been paid. No low cost meals will be provided for faculty or staff. Meal charges are not allowed the last two weeks of school, so money must be placed on your account.

## **SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES:**

**If charges occur before the meal application is approved the charges must be paid as accrued.**

Parents may elect to deny their children charge privileges. In this event, a special note will be made in the Point Of Service computer. Every effort is made to feed our students. The collection of owed charges is aggressively pursued.

## **OTHER INFORMATION FOR PARENTS**

The Whitehouse Independent School District uses a computer system for student meal purchases. All students are assigned a personal Student ID # when enrolled.

All students have their own account and money may be deposited into it on a daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis. We encourage monthly deposits to help speed up the serving lines at mealtime. We appreciate our parents who prepay for the meals. It helps the line move so much quicker, and also assures that your child will receive a meal without delay.

Parents may get information about their students eating habits anytime by using School Café, our online source, by contacting the school manager of your child's school or by calling School Nutrition office at 903/839-5658.

- ✱ The sooner your child learns their id number, the easier it is to get lunch promptly. Parents, we will try and keep you informed of your child's account balance but you can always check it using – **School Cafe** <https://www.schoolcafe.com/initial>
- ✱ Please refer to our Meal Charge and Collection policy listed for more details.

## **REMINDERS –**

- ✱ **Checks returned for insufficient funds will not be accepted for future payments and cash, money order or using School Café will be your payment options.**
- ✱ **Students are not allowed to charge second meals or snack purchases.**
- ✱ **Charges accrued before application approval must be paid.**
- ✱ **Credit Card Online Payment For Student Meals – School Cafe**  
<https://www.schoolcafe.com/initial> + service fee
- ✱ **Parents are encouraged to set up a 'Low Balance Notice' through School Café.**
- ✱ **Nonprofit school nutrition resources may not be used to cover costs related to Bad Debt arising from uncollectable accounts. These funds must come from the school district's general fund or non-federal source.**

### **USDA Nondiscrimination Statement (English)**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

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To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint), (AD-3027) found online at: <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint>, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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