

CHILD NUTRITION MEAL CHARGE POLICY

Enid Public Schools offers nutritious school meals to students at a minimal cost. In order to avoid adversely affecting the school lunch program financially, the School Board establishes policy regarding the charging of school lunches. Negative student balances affect the ability of the Child Nutrition Program to operate in a fiscally responsible manner.

Enid Public Schools' greatest priority is the health, safety and wellbeing of its students; therefore, no child will ever be denied food.

- The District discourages the charging of student lunches. Students that have charged meals shall not exceed \$ 10.00 in unpaid charges. If this amount is exceeded and not paid in a timely manner, then collection notices and procedures will be employed.
- Notices of unpaid charge balances will be sent to the parents/guardians on a regular and consistent manner to avoid the lunch program carrying charge balances. All communications will be directly with the parent or guardian. Under no circumstances will a child receive a handstamp or any other physical marking to show that they have unpaid charge balances.
- If no response to unpaid lunch charges is received by the District from parents/guardians and several attempts are made to collect the balances, excessive balances may be subject to referral to a collection agency.
- Employees of the District are expected to keep their breakfast and lunch balances current.
- Parents who could be eligible are encouraged to apply for Free and Reduced Lunches under the federal government guidelines. Applications are available at the schools and on the district website.

Students will be treated with courtesy and respect regardless of whether or not the parent has provided payment to the school district. Staff members will be instructed to adhere to this policy. If a staff member fails to adhere to the policy, disciplinary action shall be taken.

COCA-R

Administrative Regulations Child Nutrition Program Meal Charges

Communications:

- Parents or guardians will receive multiple media notification of negative meal charge balances of \$10.00 or more on a weekly basis through our "Swift K-12" system. Notification will be provided by telephone, text and e-mail depending upon contact information on file for each student.
- Parents or guardians may elect to receive a meal balance alert through PowerSchool if their child's paid balance falls below \$10.00.
- Letters (prepared by CNP staff) reflecting a student's negative meal charge balance (if \$10.00 or more) may be sent home with students in sealed plain EPS envelopes. This process will be accomplished as discreetly as possible without discussion of the contents of letter. If students ask about the letter, school employees should simply ask the student to give it to their parents.

Documentation:

- "Swift K-12" system records of phone calls made, e-mails and texts sent will serve verification of parent notification of charge balances due and possible evidence for future collection efforts.
- CNP professional will retain copies of letters sent to parents advising them of meal charges owed.

Collections:

- Printed letters reflecting meal charge balances due of \$10.00 or more will be provided to parents at parent-teacher conferences
- Teachers will be furnished a prepared script to use during the transmittal of these letters as well as Free and Reduced Meal application forms if appropriate
- Meal charge balance letters that are not delivered directly to parents at parent-teacher conferences will be sent home with students as soon as possible
- If negative meal charge balances reach \$25.00 or more site CNP professionals will make direct telephone contact with the parents, using a prepared script to present information, request payment and possibly work out a payment plan to eliminate the debt. These telephone contacts may also be used to suggest applying for free or reduced meals. CNP professionals will keep notes on the dates and times of these calls and brief notes on the conversations as potential evidence for future collection efforts.

- CNP professional may enlist the assistance of site principals if collection efforts continue to be unsuccessful.
- Principal's who are requested to assist in such collection efforts may wish to use a script prepared by our Communications Department to assist them in diplomatically dealing with this subject in a manner that will not jeopardize the trust they have developed with parents whose meal charge balances remain unpaid. Principals will also keep brief notes on the dates and times of these phone calls and conversations conducted for use as possible evidence in future collection efforts.
- If principals' collection efforts are unsuccessful, these accounts may be referred to the district CFO for possible action in local small claims court.

EPS Faculty and Staff Accounts:

- Enid Board Policy makes no provision for EPS faculty or staff to charge meals. School employees are expected to keep their meal account balances positive and current. Charging will only be allowed if the employee signs a voluntary payroll deduction agreement authorizing deductions for negative balances
- Site principals will advise their faculty and staff of these lunch balance guidelines.

Student Identification:

- Every effort will be made by school district employees to treat students, whose parents owe meal charge balances, no differently than any other student, and to prevent any adverse identification based upon such parental debt. It is not the student's fault that meal charges have become serious meal debt. All students, regardless of free or reduced meal status or meal charge debt will receive the same meal or choice of meals.
- All EPS employees are expected to treat all students respectfully and compassionately and to minimize the potential for adverse identification by other EPS employees or students.