

Adopted: June 24, 2019

MSBA/MASA Model Policy 534
Orig. 2017

Revised: _____

534 Unpaid Meal Charges Policy

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent district practices for the provision of meals to students who have insufficient funds in their school meal accounts and the collection of unpaid meal debt

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- A. BOLD Public Schools Dist. 2534's goal is to provide nutritious meals to students to promote healthy eating habits and enhance learning as well as maintain the financial integrity of the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program (NSBL) and eliminate stigmatization of children who are unable to pay meal charges.
- B. It is the policy of BOLD Public Schools to offer breakfast and lunch meals that meet state and federal guidelines.
- C. BOLD School District strives to ensure that nutritious meals are available to all students, and will work with families to keep account balances positive.
- D. Families may apply for free/reduced- price meal benefits anytime during the school year. Meal applications are distributed to all families in the district prior to the student's first day of classes. In addition, applications are available in the school office or on the district website. If a household income or size change, families can apply for meal benefits anytime during the school year.

III. PAYMENT OF MEALS

- A. Families are required to have a positive balance in their meal account at the beginning of the school year and during the course of the school year.
- B. If the student or family account is less than adequate to pay for breakfast or lunch meals, school staff will follow procedures listed below:
 1. Students in Kindergarten - 4th grade will always be given a meal regardless of meal account status. While the district is under no legal obligation to do so, we at BOLD Schools believe that this is in the best interest of the student.
 2. Students in 5th -12th grade may be provided a predetermined, courtesy meal, which meets the required meal pattern guidelines. Food Service staff will ensure the meal includes a carbohydrate, protein, fruit and/or vegetable and milk. The courtesy meal will be served to students with a negative balance of \$15.00 or greater.
 3. Students eligible for free or reduced-priced meals will always be served a meal regardless of unpaid meal accounts. When a student eligible for PAID meals has "cash in hand" to pay for a meal, the student will be served a meal regardless of unpaid meal accounts. The "cash in hand" will not be applied towards past due balances.
 4. Students with an overdrawn meal account are not allowed to charge ala carte items, till their meal account is paid current

IV. LOW OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES- NOTIFICATION

- A. The School District will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low or fall below zero. Families will be provided access to meal account status via Skyward, an online parent portal.
- B. Forms of notification are as follows
 - 1. The Food Service Department will initiate an automated low balance email message to households with \$15.00 or below in their meal accounts.
 - 2. Kindergarten - 4th grade will have low balance notices sent home weekly.
- C. Reminders for payment of outstanding student meal balances will not demean or stigmatize any student participating in the school lunch program.
- D. Negative Balances
 - 1. When a family account reaches \$25.00, household will receive personal phone call from the Food Service Director/District Office with notification of negative balance.
 - 2. When a family account reaches \$50.00, the School Social Worker will contact parents/guardians to learn more about family circumstances, and to offer assistance in filling out free/reduced lunch applications, or to assist in developing a plan to rectify meal account status.

V. COLLECTION

- A. The School district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. Unpaid meal charges are designated as delinquent debt when payment is overdue, the debt is considered collectable, and efforts are being made to collect it.
- B. Negative balances of more than \$75.00, at the end of the school year, will be turned over to the Superintendent's office for collection. (Collection options may include, but are not limited to: use of collection agencies, claims in the conciliation court, or any other legal method permitted by law). All collection fees will be charged to the family.
 - 1. The student/family will be asked to provide their own meals until the meal account debt is paid in full.
- C. The requirement is all fees owed to the School District will be paid in full on the last day of attendance for the current school year.

VI. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

- A. This policy and any pertinent supporting information shall be provided in writing (i.e., mail, back-to-school packet, student handbook, district's website, etc.) to:
 - 1. All households at or before the start of each school year.
 - 2. Students and families who transfer into the school district, at time of enrollment; and
 - 3. All school district personnel who are responsible for enforcing the policy.

Reviewed Date: _____
Approved Date: _____