

St. Francis Area Schools

Nutrition Services Program

Unpaid Meal Account Charges and Debt Collection Procedures

I. PURPOSE

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

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF PROCEDURES

- A. St. Francis'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 programs, and eliminate the stigmatization of children in the cafeteria who may be unable to pay for a meal.
- B. St. Francis Schools offer breakfast and lunch meals that meet state and federal guidelines to all students regardless of an unpaid meal account balance.
- C. The purchase of school meals is set up through a prepaid meal system. Families are required to have funds deposited into school meal accounts in order for students to purchase meals.
 - i. Students who qualify for "paid" meals (not free or reduced-eligible) may purchase meals when funds have been deposited into their accounts either online at www.paypams.com or by cash or check payment.
 - ii. Our district strives to ensure that nutritious meals are available to all students, but must insist that a student's prepaid meal account be kept up to date in order to avoid formal collection procedures.
- D. Families may apply for free/reduced-price meal benefits anytime during the school year. Meal applications are mailed to all families in the school/district prior to the start of the school year. In addition, applications are available online at www.isd15.org/page.cfm?p=713, by calling the Nutrition Office at (763)753-7015. Families may submit a paperless application by logging into the Infinite Campus Parent Portal, select applications/forms, then "click here to start"
- E. If household income or size changes, families can reapply for meal benefits anytime during the school year.

III. CHARGE MEAL PROCEDURES

- A. It is St. Francis Area School's procedure that if the student account has insufficient funds to pay for breakfast and/or lunch meals, a student will still be allowed to purchase a meal, which will cause the account balance to become negative.
 - i. All students desiring a meal will be provided a meal regardless of meal account status. While the district is under no legal obligation to do so, we believe that this is in the best interest of the student.

- ii. Students are not allowed to charge ala carte items. Students with negative balances, will not be able to purchase a la carte items, if they have cash in hand, unless the negative balance is made current first.
- iii. Adults are not allowed to charge meals or ala carte items. Adults with negative balances will not be able to purchase meals or ala carte items, if they have cash in hand, until the outstanding balance is made current first.**

IV. NOTIFICATION OF ACCOUNT STATUS

A. St. Francis Area Schools utilizes several methods to notify households of negative meal balances:

- i. Families can check their student's meal account balance when logged in to Infinite Campus Parent Portal.
- ii. The Nutrition Office will send an automated e-mail to all parents when their student's balance is below \$5.00, and an automated phone call to all parents when their students' meal account balance is below \$0.00 (negative balance).
- iii. The Nutrition Office will send a monthly letter to families for their students' account(s) that owe \$10.00 or more.
- iv. The Nutrition Office will encourage all parents to complete the free/reduced-price meal application each school year to assist with meal accounts.
- v. Parents can make payments with credit or debit card online at www.paypams.com as well as sign up for account notifications.

V. COLLECTION OF UNPAID MEAL DEBT

A. Families that have received multiple phone calls, emails and a negative balance letter and have failed to set up a payment plan for an account owing more than \$50.00 will be sent to the districts' collection agency for collection of the delinquent meal account balance.