REQUIRED

ABEC - SCHOOL MEAL CHARGE POLICY

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.

Adults
Adults are prohibited from charging meals.

Dissemination
The Superintendent must ensure that uniform meal account policy is posted on the district's website and provided in writing, to all parents of students at the start of each school year and to the parents of students transferring to the school mid-year. The Superintendent shall also provide the policy to all school and district-level staff members responsible for the enforcement of this regulation.

The District may use additional methods to disseminate the policy on an ongoing basis throughout the school year.

Payment Options
Parents are responsible to ensure that students have sufficient funds to purchase school meals each day or pre-pay for meals, to avoid accruing meal charges. District payment options for student meal accounts include in person or through E-Funds.

Provision of Meals to Students with Insufficient Funds
A school meal may not be denied to a student who requests one regardless of the status of the student's meal account or ability to pay unless the student's parent or guardian has provided written permission to the school to withhold a meal. An alternative meal may not be served to a student with an unpaid student meal balance or without funds to pay for a meal. A school meal that has already been served to the student may not be disposed of or taken away from the student on account of the student having an unpaid meal balance or lacking the funds to pay for a meal.

A student's participation in any school activities, graduation ceremonies, field trips, athletics, activity clubs, or other extracurricular activities or access to materials, technology, or other items provided to students may not be limited as a result of an unpaid or negative student meal balance.

Payment Reminders
Whenever a student incurs a charge, district personnel shall notify the parents of the student by letter, phone, text, etc. Notice may be provided by requiring the student to deliver a sealed letter addressed to the child's parent or guardian, but the letter may not be distributed to the student in a manner that stigmatizes the student.

If a pattern of charging continues, administration shall attempt to contact the student's parents and encourage the parent to complete a free or reduced meal application.

Nothing in this procedure prohibits school district personnel from reporting suspected abuse or neglect of a student as required by law.

Unpaid Meal Charges
Parents are expected to pay all charges within 30 days. If they fail to do so, the District may rollover debt or refer the debt to collections. The District may use an alternative funding source (e.g., nonfederal funding or charitable funding source) to offset costs incurred from unpaid meal charges and collection fees. A student may not be required to provide services or perform work, including cleaning duties or chores, to pay for school meals debt.

Balance
Students returning to school in the District shall see a positive meal balance rolled forward into their meal account for the next year. Students that graduate or withdraw from the District may receive a refund of the remaining balance in their meal account within 30 workdays of completion or departure unless they wish to donate the funds.

A written request for a refund of monies remaining in an enrolled student's meal account at the end of the school year must be submitted to the district office. A student who is graduating shall be given the option to transfer meal funds to a sibling's account. Any money left in an inactive account may be donated to help struggling students with insufficient funds in their meal accounts.

Complementing NDSBA Templates (may contain items not adopted by the Board)

- ABEC-AR, Adult Meals

End of Richardton-Taylor School District #34 Policy ABEC ..... Adopted: Feb. 12, 2025

[07/23]