

## MEAL CHARGES

In accordance with state and federal law, the Newton Community School District adopts the following policy to ensure school district employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. The policy seeks to allow students to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day, prevent the overt identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals, and maintain the financial integrity of the nonprofit school nutrition program.

### Payment of Meals

#### **Families**

Students have use of a meal account. When the family account balance reaches a negative \$200.00, a Food Service representative will contact the family and discuss options available for their student. When an account reaches this limit, a student shall not be allowed to charge a la carte items until the negative account balance is paid in full. Families may add money to student accounts in the following ways: online payment via district website using a credit card, pay at the school office, or pay the Food Service cashier.

Students who qualify for free meals shall never be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from previous purchases.

#### **Employees**

Employees may use a charge account for meals, but may charge no more than \$200 to this account. When an account reaches this limit, an employee shall not be allowed to charge further meals until the negative account balance is paid in full.

#### **Negative Account Balances**

The school district will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low. Additionally, the school district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. The school district will coordinate communications with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges.

- 1) Negative balances of more than \$150.00 will be turned over to the principal or superintendent's designee for personal phone calls.
- 2) Families will be notified of an outstanding negative balance once a \$200 negative balance is reached through the following methods: automated email system, personal phone calls, letters sent home.
- 3) Options after this may include: collection agencies, small claims court, or any other legal method permitted by law.

Under no circumstances will a student be denied a meal.

#### **Communication of the Policy**

The policy and supporting information regarding meal charges shall be provided in writing to:

- All households at or before the start of each school year;
- Students and families who transfer into the district, at time of transfer; and
- All staff responsible for enforcing any aspect of the policy.

Records of how and when the policy and supporting information was communicated to households and staff will be retained.

The superintendent may develop an administrative process to implement this policy.

MEAL CHARGES

Legal Reference: 42 U.S.C. §§ 1751 *et seq.*  
7 C.F.R. §§ 210 *et seq.*  
U.S. DEP'T OF AGRIC., SP 46-2016, UNPAID MEAL CHARGES: LOCAL MEAL CHARGE POLICIES (2016).  
U.S. DEP'T OF AGRIC., SP 47-2016, UNPAID MEAL CHARGES: CLARIFICATION ON COLLECTION OF DELINQUENT MEAL PAYMENTS (2016).  
U.S. DEP'T OF AGRIC., SP 57-2016, UNPAID MEAL CHARGES: GUIDANCE AND Q&A (2016).  
Iowa Code 283A.  
281 I.A.C. 58.

Cross Reference: 710.1 School Food Program  
710.2 Free or Reduced Cost Meals Eligibility  
710.3 Vending Machine

Approved 07/24/17

Reviewed \_\_\_\_\_

Revised \_\_\_\_\_