

In accordance with state and federal law, the Cedar Falls 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

In the event a meal account does not have funds to purchase the meal, a student will not be denied the purchase of a reimbursable breakfast and/or lunch. Students who qualify for free meals will continue to receive a reimbursable meal, regardless of any negative account balance. Students who cannot pay for a meal or who owe meal debt shall not be subjected to any of the acts prohibited by law relating to free or reduced-priced meals and unpaid meal charges.

Accounts must have a positive balance for the purchase of ala carte items at breakfast or lunch. This applies to all students including students from families participating in the Free and Reduced Meal Program. Non-student accounts must have sufficient funds to make a purchase of both meals and ala carte items.

Negative Account Balances

Negative balances must be paid in full prior to the end of the current school year or as part of the check-out process when a student and/or employee leaves the district or graduates. 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 negative account balances. Families will be notified of an outstanding negative balance once the negative balance reaches \$0.00. Families will be notified either by the District's electronic message system (e-mail or text), phone call or letters sent home. Negative balances of \$30.00 or more, not paid prior to the end of the month will be turned over to the superintendent or superintendent's designee for collection. Options may include: collection agencies, small claims court, or any other legal method permitted by law.

Management of Donations for Unpaid Meal Debt

Donations received by the District for unpaid meal debt will be applied to delinquent accounts following procedures set by the District. The District will ensure that donated funds are distributed fairly and transparently to support families with outstanding meal balances. While donor may specify a particular school building for their contribution, they may not designate funds for individual students.

The District will establish an unpaid student meal account in a student nutrition fund. Funds from private sources and funds from district flexibility account may be deposited into the unpaid school meals account in accordance with law. Funds deposited into this account shall be used only to pay individual student meal debt.

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 or designee may develop an administrative process to implement this policy.

Date of Adoption: June 12, 2017

Date of Revision: August 13, 2018
September 2, 2020
August 11, 2025