

## **MEAL CHARGES**

In accordance with state and federal law, the Bondurant-Farrar CSD 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**

Students have use of a meal account. When an account reaches a negative balance of (\$10.00), a student will not be allowed to charge a la carte items until the negative account balance is paid. Parents/Guardians may use the online payment system or deposit cash or check into the account by paying at any of the school building offices. Parents/Guardians may choose to prohibit purchasing meals and/or a la carte/extra items resulting in extra charges to meal accounts at any time by contacting the Nutrition Department.

Students who qualify for free meals will never be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from previous purchases. Schools are encouraged to provide a reimbursable meal to students with outstanding meal charge debt. If an alternate meal is provided, the meal must be the same meal presented in the same manner to any student requesting an alternate meal.

Employees may use a charge account for meals, but may charge no more than (\$20.00) to this account. When an account reaches this limit, an employee will not be allowed to charge further meals or a la carte items until the negative account balance is paid.

### **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 the student's parent or guardian to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Parents or guardians will be notified of an outstanding negative balance once the negative balance reaches (\$20.00) by email and letters sent home. Negative balances of more than (\$20.00), not paid within the (10) days of notification may be turned over to the superintendent or superintendent's designee for collection. Options may include collection agencies, small claims court, or any legal method permitted by law.

Negative balances of more than (\$100.00), not paid prior to the end of the school year, 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.

### **Unpaid Student Meals Account**

Our school lunch program wants to make every effort to make sure every child receives a healthy meal each day. In order to do that it is very important all lunch accounts maintain a positive lunch balance. We believe our policy outlined is a simple and comprehensive way to achieve this. If at any time a family is having a difficult time keeping a positive balance in their lunch account, they may contact the nutrition director, building principal or school counselor for assistance.

Negative balances will be carried over to the following school year. These negative balances must be paid in full prior to school starting as part of the school registration processor before graduation of a senior student.

## Communication of the Policy

The policy and supporting information regarding meal charges will 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.

It is the responsibility of the superintendent or designee to develop an administrative regulation for implementing this policy.

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  
710.1-R1 School Food Program – School Nutrition Program Civil Rights Complaints Procedure  
710.1-E1 School Food Program – School Nutrition Program Notices of Nondiscrimination  
710.1-E2 School Food Program – Child Nutrition Programs Civil Rights Complaint Form  
710.2 Free or Reduced Cost Meals Eligibility  
710.3 Vending Machine

**Approved:** 05/22/2017  
**Reviewed:** 08/19/2024  
**Revised:** 08/19/2024