

## **MEAL CHARGES**

In accordance with state and federal law, the Northeast 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**

Each student has a computerized family meal account. Parents must pre-pay money into the family meal account. The computer records the meal and deducts the appropriate amount for each student from the family's account. To keep meal prices reasonable, the Food Service Department & office staff at each building closely monitors student accounts to prevent negative balances and charges. Here are some of the services we provide to parents to ensure their child has adequate funds for meals.

- Parents may monitor student accounts from home via their JMC Parent account.
- Online prepayments with debit/credit cards are accepted and may be made through JMC. Control/Click on the link below to be directed to JMC Parent Log in.

<https://jmc.northeast.k12.ia.us/Parent>

Enter your Username and Password, Click on Lunch Tab, Click on Online Deposit (Family Account) and proceed with your payment.

- Please allow a minimum of 24 hours for deposits via Pay Schools to be processed and show up in student accounts.
- Cash or check payments are always accepted at your child's school office.

Students who qualify for free meals shall never be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from previous purchases. Students with outstanding meal charge debt shall be allowed to purchase a meal if the student pays for the meal when it is received.

### **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. Families will be notified of an outstanding negative balance once the balance reaches \$10.00 Families will be notified by daily emails at \$10.00, automated calling system at -\$20.00, and letters will be mailed home at -\$20.00.

**Parents with negative family accounts of greater than negative -\$50.00 will be notified in writing to send a sack lunch from home until negative balances are taken care of and the family balance is at \$0. Your child/children will not be allowed to charge a meal, breakfast or lunch. Middle/High School students will not be allowed to purchase seconds or additional a' la carte items unless they have a positive lunch balance.**

**Negative balances not paid prior end of the school year will be turned over to the superintendent's office for collection. Options may include: collection agencies, small claims court, or any other legal method permitted by law.**

### **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.

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: May 24, 2017**