

Section: 200 Pupils  
Title: Meal Charge Policy  
Number: 235.2  
Status: Approved 9-5-2017 Board Meeting  
Legal: 1.7 CFR Part 245

**Purpose:**

The Uniontown Area School District is committed to providing nutritious meals to all students. The district must establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the district. Unpaid charges place a financial burden on the food service department and the school district. The goals of this policy are (PDE-010):

1. To establish a consistent and official district policy regarding meal charges and the collection of charges.
2. To treat all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts.
3. To support positive situations with district staff, district business policies, students and parent/guardian to the maximum extent possible.
4. To establish policies that are age appropriate.
5. To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student.

**Delegation of Responsibility:**

Food Service Department is responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the building principal of outstanding balances. The Food Service Department is also responsible for notifying the student's parent/guardian of low and outstanding balances.

The District is responsible for supporting The Food Service Department in collection activities.

The Parent/Guardian is responsible for making immediate payment.

## Guidelines:

### Policy Administration

1. Free and Reduced Students.
  - a. Free lunch status students will not be permitted to have a negative balance due to charging items. Free lunch status permits a child to receive a free meal every day. A la carte items are not a part of the National School Lunch Program.
  - b. Reduced lunch status students will be allowed to have a negative balance up to the maximum dollar equivalent of six (6) reduced price meals which will here in be referred to as the “account cap”. Reduced status allows a student to receive meals at a price greatly reduced from the regular meal price.
  
2. All Other Students.
  - a. Elementary students will be permitted to charge up to a maximum dollar equivalent of three (3) meals as the account cap. A la carte items are not permitted to be charged by any student at any time.
    1. These meals will include any meal on the menu.
    2. Notices of low or deficit balances will be sent to parent/guardian at regular intervals as needed.
    3. When the child’s balance reached the account cap, they will be offered a designated entrée alternate in addition to any offered fruit, vegetable and milk. A designated entrée example would be a cheese sandwich.
    4. The designated menu alternate will be charged to the child’s lunch account at the regular rate. It will be reported as a meal to the state and federal school lunch authorities and thus be eligible for reimbursement. Parents/Guardians are responsible for payment of these meals to the Food Service Department.
    5. No ala carte items will be sold to a child who has a negative balance without first paying off the negative balance amount.
  - b. Middle/High School students will be permitted to charge up to a maximum dollar equivalent of two (2) meals as the account cap. A la carte items are not permitted to be charged by any student at any time.
    1. These meals will include any meal on the menu.

2. Notices of low or deficit balances will be sent to parent/guardians at regular intervals as needed.
3. When the child reaches the account cap, they will be offered a designated entrée alternate in addition to any offered fruit, vegetable and milk. A designated entrée example would be a cheese sandwich.
4. The designated meal alternate will be charged to the child's lunch account at the regular rate. It will be reported as a meal to the state and federal school lunch authorities and thus will be eligible for reimbursement. Parents/Guardians are responsible for payment of these meals to the Food Service Department.
5. No ala carte items will be sold to a child who has a negative balance without first paying off the negative balance amount.

3. Balances Owed:

Collection of balances owed will be attempted by the Food Service Department as needed for students with negative balances throughout the year. All accounts must be settled by the parent/guardian before the last day of school. All unpaid balances will be turned over to the School District on or before June 30<sup>th</sup>.

- A. When a payment by check is returned for NSF, a letter will be sent to inform the parent/guardian from the Food Service Department. Payment for the NSF check must be in the form of cash, money order or cashier's check. The amount of the original check will be immediately deducted from the student's meal account upon notice from the bank and the above mentioned rules will take effect.
- B. If there is no response to correct balances owed from charges or NSF checks by the parent/guardian, the Superintendent or his/her designee may take one or more of the following actions, unless or until prohibited by state law or regulation:
  1. Delay the issuance of report cards, transfer cards and class assignments until obligations are met.
  2. Prohibit participation of the student or other students in the student's household from participating in any future fee based program until or unless outstanding balances are resolved.
  3. Prohibit student participation in senior activities or graduation exercises.
  4. Referral to small claims court and/or District Attorney's office.

4. End of Year charges.

a. Three (3) weeks prior to the last day of school, the point of sale system will be set to not accept deficit account payments from any student including the cap limits.

b. Students who do not have money and insufficient balance to cover meals will be provided a designated alternate entrée as previously noted. The meal alternate will be charged at the standard lunch rate and reported as previously noted.

c. Charges not paid by the end of the year will be turned over to the School District on or before June 30<sup>th</sup> with the exception of senior students who must pay all charges before receiving their cap and gown.

d. All seniors will receive a notice in May of remaining money in their point of sale account. They can request to move the money into a sibling's point of sale account or elect to receive a refund. Refund requests that are \$5.00 or less may be given to the student in cash, if available. Refund requests above \$5.00 will be made via check from the District.

Each district cafeteria utilizes a computerized point of sale system with an online prepayment system. The system maintains a record of all monies spent by each student and is available online to the parent/guardian. Upon request, a printout will be sent to the parent/guardian. The Food Service Department will inform parents/guardians that meals can be paid for in advance to minimize the possibility that a child could be without meal money on any given day.

A. If a student is without meal money on a frequent basis:

1. The Food Service Department will investigate the situation more closely.
2. The Food Service Department may contact the parent/guardian by phone to request money for the purchase of meals or to encourage the parent/guardian to apply for free or reduced price meals.
3. The Food Service Department may request intervention from a school counselor to determine if a more serious household situation exists.

B. Blocks on accounts can be requested by parents/guardians by phone or in writing. Parents/guardians may request that the Food Service Department place a limit on or note the student's account to prohibit purchases of certain items or at a set dollar cap.

### C. Refunds:

1. For any student who is withdrawn, a written request for any money remaining in a student's meal account must be submitted to Food Service Department. An email request is also acceptable.
2. Students who are graduating at the end of the year will be given a refund per above established guidelines or transferred to a sibling's account.
3. Households must request refunds within the current school year. Any unclaimed funds not requested by June 30<sup>th</sup> of the current school year become the property of the Food Service Department.