

POLO R-VII SCHOOL DISTRICT

MEAL CHARGE POLICY

The goal of the Polo R-VII School District is to provide students with healthy meals each day. However, unpaid charges place a large financial burden on our district. The purpose of this policy is to insure compliance with federal reporting requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances.

The intent of this policy is to establish uniform meal account procedures throughout the Polo R-VII School District. The provisions of this policy pertain to regular and reduced price school breakfast and lunch meals only. While the USDA Child Nutrition Program does not require that a student who pays for regular or reduced priced meals be served a meal without payment, the Polo R-VII School District provides this policy as a courtesy to those students in the event they forget or lose their money OR the balance goes below -0- in the middle of a pay period for the family.

THE FOLLOWING PROVISIONS ARE IN EFFECT ACCORDING TO POLO R-VII BOARD POLICY EF-AP1:

A student may not accumulate more than TEN unpaid meal charges.
Students may not charge a' la carte items.

Alternative Meals:

A student who has accumulated TEN unpaid meal charges and is still unable to pay for meals may be provided an alternative meal. Alternative meals will be on the regular serving line and will be available to all students as an alternative to the regular meal. If a student has been provided a regular meal that meal WILL NOT be taken away from the student even if the student should have been provided an alternative meal due to unpaid meal charges.

Interventions:

After a student accumulates FIVE unpaid meal charges, the district will encourage the parents/guardians to submit an application for free or reduced meals if an application has not already been submitted, and the student will be referred to the counselor for intervention.

District employees are mandated by the state of Missouri to report any instances of suspected abuse or neglect to the Children's Division (CD) of the Department of Social Services. District personnel will report to the CD any instance where a student's arrival at school with no provision for food leads to a reasonable cause to suspect neglect.

Working with Parents/Guardians

To ensure that parents/guardians have ample opportunity to resolve situations involving unpaid meal charges, the district will provide timely notification to them when account balances run low.

Work with parents/guardians to create a payment plan that allows for the payment of accumulated balances over time.

Debt Collection

Delinquent Debt

Unpaid meal charges will be considered a delinquent debt NINETY (90) days after notice that charges are due when no payment or payment plan agreement has been made. Unpaid charges will be considered delinquent as long as the district determines the debt is collectible and efforts to collect the debt are ongoing. The district will make reasonable efforts to collect delinquent debt, including turning over unpaid meal charge balances to a collection agency when the superintendent or designee determines such action is in the best interest of the district. The district's Nonprofit School Food Services Account (NSFSA) funds may be used to cover the costs of reasonable efforts to collect delinquent debt, including costs associated with using a collection agency.

Bad Debt

When the district determines that collection of delinquent debt is impossible or too costly, the debt will be reclassified as bad debt. Bad debt is debt that will be written off as an operating cost. These costs must be restored using nonfederal funds. NSFSA resources may not be used to cover any costs related to bad debt. Instead, local funds will have to be used to cover costs.