

MEAL CHARGES

In accordance with state and federal law, the Clarinda 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.

Families are encouraged to apply for free or reduced meals anytime during the school year. Applications are available at all school offices or at the district website. Free and reduced applications are confidential.

Payment of Meals

All meal purchases are prepaid before meal service begins. Payment can be made at any school administrative office (elementary school, middle school, high school), the district administrative office, or online through RevTrak. Students who do not have sufficient funds shall not be allowed to charge meals or ala carte items until sufficient money is deposited in the family account.

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 meal charges that have been sent to collection 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 when the account does not have sufficient funds to provide meal services. The district may notify families of delinquent debt by email, letter, phone, and text messaging as possible. Negative balances that exceed \$10 and not paid prior the end of the week will be turned over to the superintendent or the superintendent's designee for collection. Failure to make payment to the district may result in use of additional collection options, such as collection agencies, small claims court, or any other legal methods 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

Reviewed

Revised