

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF WAUZEKA-STEUBEN

FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT

Students in the School District of Wauzeka-Steuben shall have an opportunity to participate in school lunch, breakfast and milk programs. These programs shall be administered by the District Administrator, or designee, in accordance with established guidelines.

The purposes of this policy are:

- to define how the District will handle situations where students eligible to receive reduced price or paid meals do not have money in their account or in hand to cover the cost of their meal at the time of service.
- To describe how delinquent meal charges will be collected
- To determine how and when delinquent meal charges are reclassified as “bad debt.”
- To establish a training program for staff involved in administering school meal programs and provide for other details pertaining to implementation of this policy.

The District utilizes a computer software program to keep track of family accounts. Food Service personnel receive payments for your entire family, credits this to your family account, and as your child(ren) purchase meals, milk, and/or ala carte items, an offsetting charge for those purchases will be made against your family account.

Food service prices (including breakfast and milk) shall be established by the Board annually. In accordance with federal guidelines, the District shall offer free and reduced price food services to students who qualify.

Parent(s)/Legal guardian(s) who claim that the financial condition of their families has changed or are such that they cannot afford to pay for the cost of their child(ren)’s meals shall be invited to make application for free or reduced meals in accordance with federal regulations. Should their income change, applicants may reapply any time during the school year. There is no limit to the number of times applications will be accepted.

Parent(s)/Legal guardian(s) are encouraged to send one check for the whole family. You may send in any amount, whether it is daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually. Checks should be made payable to the School District of Wauzeka-Steuben. Electronic payments are accepted through the Efunds link on the District’s website.

Insufficient Funds

Parents/Guardians are responsible for keeping money on account to pay for meals. Maintaining a positive balance will prevent the district from having to use the next steps. Student accounts will be reviewed daily, and notifications sent out as needed. As a courtesy, the District will notify parent/guardian when a student’s account falls below \$10.

A student who has funds in hand to purchase a meal must be permitted to purchase the meal irrespective

of whether the student's account is delinquent. A student who is entitled to purchase meals at reduced rates need only have sufficient funds to purchase the meal at the reduced rate for that meal.

Students who qualify for free meals may never be denied a meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from other purchases in the cafeteria. A student certified for free meals will not be allowed to charge a la carte or "extra" items (e.g., a second milk or additional entrée) if the student's account is negative, but may not be denied a reimbursable meal.

Collection of Delinquent Charges

The District Administrator, or designee, shall be expected to protect the taxpayers of the District in making every effort to collect all food service related charges due the District. Steps taken may include :

1. Contacting the parent/guardian by phone and/or email and/or regular mail. A copy of this policy and information about applying for free or reduced lunches will be provided to the parent/guardian if the contact is made by email or regular mail.
2. Requiring a meeting with the parent/guardian.
3. Establishing a repayment plan consistent with the family's means and/or providing a copy of this policy and information about applying for free or reduced lunches will be provided to the parent/guardian at the meeting.
3. Small claims actions.

Efforts will be made to ensure that students are not involved in or negatively impacted by any collection efforts. Consideration must also be given to whether the cost of any collection effort exceeds the benefit of potential collection.

Negative family balances can be carried over to the next school year or turned over to a collection agency or small claims court, as approved by the Board of Education. All family balances of the food service and other student school fees must be paid in full prior to participation in the Eighth (8th) grade recognition ceremony as well as a high school senior's participation in the graduation ceremony.

Any exception to the above requirements must be handled on an individual basis.

Other than where unpaid meal charges are carried over, collection efforts should be made within one (one) year of the date of the first unresolved delinquency.

If the balance of the family account reaches minus \$50, notification will be sent to the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) stating the food service bill is in arrears. Full payment or payment arrangements are expected to be made within ten (10) days of the date of the letter or no further credit will be allowed in utilization of the Food Service Program meals or ala carte. On the 11th day a student with a negative account balance will be permitted to eat, however a call will be made to the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) by the principal prior to that evening to remind the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) to pay the debt or make other lunch arrangements until payment is made.

If the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) thereafter fails to provide the student with a bag lunch or lunch money, the District may file a report with the Department of Human Services.

Parent(s)/Legal guardian(s) will be charged the current bank fee for any returned checks due to insufficient funds. This fee is deducted from the family account.

“Bad Debt” Determinations

The District Administrator may determine that a delinquent debt is uncollectable and no further collection efforts will be made, at which point the debt must be reclassified as “bad debt.” Because bad debt must be written off as an operating loss must be restored to the Nonprofit School Food Service Account (NSFSA) using other district resources including general fund accounts, conversion of delinquent debt to bad debt is permitted only under the following circumstances:

1. Bankruptcy or other insolvency proceedings prohibit further debt collection efforts.
2. Collection costs, including related legal and/or court costs, would exceed the amount of the debt by more than a 3:1 margin.
3. The student no longer attends district schools and the family cannot be located.
4. Other exigent circumstances individual to each family which, in the judgment of the District Administrator, warrant reclassification of the debt (serious illness or death in the family, divorce, loss of a job, or similar circumstances).

The following records must be maintained to document the appropriate establishment and handling of bad debt:

1. Evidence of efforts to collect unpaid meal charges in accordance with the State or local unpaid meal charge policy;
2. Evidence the collection efforts fell within the timeframe and methods established by this policy;
3. Financial documentation showing when the unpaid meal charge(s) became an operating loss; and
4. Evidence any funds written off as bad debt were restored to the NSFSA using non-federal sources.

Refunds

Accounts with a positive balance at the end of the school year will carry over to the following school year. If a graduating senior has a positive balance, it will be distributed to a sibling returning to the District the following year. If the account balance is less than \$10.00, cash will be given to the graduating senior on the last day of school; if it is more \$10.00 a check will be mailed out at the end of the school year if there is no sibling returning to the District. If a family moves out of district, or becomes eligible for free meals, refunds will be made to families of positive balance amounts within thirty (30) days.

Notifications to Families and Students

Federal law requires that a copy of this policy be provided annually in writing to all families at the start of each school year and to families or students transferring to the school during the school year. In order to ensure that all families are provided with a copy of this policy, a copy shall be emailed or mailed to all families in the District by August 1st of each year. In addition:

1. The policy shall be posted on school or district websites;
2. The policy shall be mentioned in reminder calls or included in written notices of low or negative account balances; and •
3. The policy or a summary thereof when using existing notification methods to inform households about applying for free or reduced price meals., such as distributing household applications at the start of the school year.

Notifications to Staff

Federal law also requires that a copy of this policy be provided to all staff responsible for policy enforcement. This includes school food service professionals responsible for collecting payment for meals at the point of service, staff involved in notifying families of low or negative balances, and staff involved in enforcing any other aspects of this policy. Other staff members, including classroom teachers and the District's homeless student liaison, also should be informed of the policy.

In order to ensure that there is minimal negative impact, embarrassment or distress to students with unpaid meal charges and to ensure confidentiality of the identity of any student's free or reduced lunch eligibility status, the following practices shall be observed:

1. Low or negative account balances shall remain confidential to the extent practicable.
2. Staff members are not to notify students of their meal charge debt in front of other students.
3. The assistance of unauthorized persons, such as parent or guardian volunteers, to follow up with debt collection efforts related to unpaid meal charges is prohibited.
4. Food service staff must ensure that rosters, computer screens, or other equipment used at the point of service cannot be viewed by anyone who does not need access to the information, especially other students.

When the buses run on the two-hour late start schedule breakfast will not be served to the students. Parents/Legal guardians should serve their children breakfast at home on these days.

The District shall not discriminate in school-sponsored food service programs on the basis of sex, age, race, religion, color, national origin, homelessness status, ancestry, creed, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability or handicap.

Legal References: Wisconsin State Statutes §§ 115.34, 115.341, 115.343, 120.10(16), 120.13(6) (10); PI 9.03(1)(i), Wisconsin Administrative Code; PL 91-248, PL 94-105; National School Lunch Act Reauthorization of 2010; Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (42 USC 1771 et. Seq.); Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 Sections 118.13 Wisconsin Statutes: Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296); 7 CFR 210, 220, 245; USDA memo SP46 2016; USDA memo SP47 2016; USDA memo SP23-2017; USDA guidance SP29-2017; 2 C.F.R. §200, Subpart E 2 C.F.R. §200.426

Cross References: Policy 458 School Wellness

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