

### Meal Charge Policy

It is the policy of Holdrege Public Schools to participate in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. It is the goal of the District to assure that each child has a nutritious breakfast and lunch.

### Student Eligibility

Families of students who may be eligible for free or reduced price school meals should submit an application to determine their eligibility. Applications are mailed to each student household at the start of the school year and are available at each school office and Central Office. As long as an application is submitted on or after July 1, the application will be considered current for the new school year. A student may become eligible for free or reduced meals at any time during the school year if the household experiences a change in financial circumstances or household size and a new application is approved.

### Meal Account Balances

The District uses an automated system which requires each student to have a pin number. This system requires money to be in the account in order to purchase a meal or ala carte items. Families whose applications are not approved for free meals, or who would like to be able to purchase ala carte items, will need to send money to the school or log into the student information system to deposit money into the account.

The parent/guardian may contact the school office to create a parent portal account within the student information system. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to keep a positive balance in the account. Automatic notices, such as calls, texts, emails, for low balances can be set by each household within the student information system.

The District will provide notice, such as calls, texts, emails, or notes, when an account reaches zero. If the balance becomes negative, no further regular breakfast or lunch will be offered to the student or students in the household associated with the account. Subsequently, an alternate meal will be provided to the student and charges for the alternate meal will continue to accrue to the account, or a nutritious sack lunch may be brought from home. Sack lunches may not contain soda pop or energy drinks.

The District will ensure that families can check their meal account balances online or contact the school directly or Central Office. Payments may be made in the following manner:

- Cash or check payable to Holdrege Public Schools may be presented to the school office.
- Online payments may be made through the student information system parent portal via ACH (bank account) withdrawal with no processing fee. Acknowledgment of the payment will be transmitted via email.
- Online payments may be made through the student information system parent portal via credit card or debit card and an additional processing fee will be assessed. Acknowledgment of the payment will be transmitted via email.

The District encourages families to prepay for meals. Students and families may also add funds during the school day. Any balance remaining in an account shall carry over into the next month. Households with funds remaining in their account at the end of the school year may request a refund or carry over funds to the next school year. When a student leaves the District or graduates, the District shall attempt to contact the student's household to return any funds remaining in the student's meal account.

#### Collection of Delinquent Meal Charge Debt

Unpaid meal charges may be carried over at the end of the school year as a delinquent debt and the District shall undertake reasonable collection efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt, pursuant to and in compliance with state and federal law.

#### Student Confidentiality

The District will disclose individual student eligibility information only to those persons (and organizations) that require the information in order to carry out an activity specifically authorized by the National School Lunch Act, subject to applicable legal exceptions.

The District shall not use or implement any colored or coded meal cards, tickets, tokens, or other methods of payment that would overtly identify a student as being eligible for free or reduced price meals.

#### Distribution Annually

This policy shall be provided in writing to all students' households at the start of each school year and to households transferring to the District during the school year.

This policy shall also be provided annually to District staff members responsible for the enforcement of this policy, including food service professionals.

The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee shall maintain documentation of the annual distribution of this policy to students' households and District staff.

Legal Reference: Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. § 1751); U.S.D.A. Memorandum SP 57-2016.

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