

MEAL CHARGES

In accordance with state and federal law, the Pella 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.

Payment of Meals

Students have use of a meal account. Lunch money can be paid online through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal or by bringing cash or a check to the school office.

- When the student's balance reaches \$5.00:
 - The student's parent/guardian will receive a daily automated email indicating a low lunch balance.
- When the student's balance is between -\$0.01 and \$45.00:
 - The student will be allowed to eat one school breakfast meal and one school lunch meal (as defined by the USDA) each day and still charge the meal to their lunch account.
 - The student may eat a-la-carte food items with cash-in-hand only.
- When the student's balance exceeds -\$45.00:
 - The student may eat school breakfast, school lunch, and a-la-carte food items with cash-in-hand only.
 - The student may bring a cold lunch.

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 outstanding meal charge debt 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 of an outstanding negative balance once the negative balance reaches -\$0.01. Families will be notified by an automated email. Negative balances of more than \$45.00, not paid prior to the end of the school year will be turned over to the superintendent, or superintendent's designee for collection. Options may include: collection agencies, small claims court, or any other legal method 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. DEPT OF AGRIC., SP 46-2016, UNPAID MEAL CHARGES: LOCAL MEAL CHARGE POLICIES (2016).

U.S. DEPT OF AGRIC., SP 47-2016, UNPAID MEAL CHARGES: CLARIFICATION ON COLLECTION OF DELINQUENT MEAL PAYMENTS (2016).

U.S. DEPT 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 BY BOE 6.19.17

APPROVED BY BOE 4.9.18

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