



IRVINGTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Meal Charge Procedures

I. FEDERAL REQUIREMENT

The purpose of this policy is to address the need for school food authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) to institute and clearly communicate a meal charge policy, which would include, if applicable, the availability of alternate meals. Because all students in participating schools may receive reimbursable school meals, all SFAs must have a policy in place for children who are participating at the free, reduced price or paid rate, but either do not have money in their account or in hand to cover the cost of the meal at the time of service. Such a policy ensures that school food service professionals, school administrators, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations in these situations.

This requirement is referred to as a “policy,” but whether this is referred to as a “policy” or “standard practice” is at the discretion of the SFA. Regardless of terminology used, the policy or standard practice must consist of a written document explaining how the SFA will handle situations where children 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. The policy or standard practice must be implemented throughout the SFA.

You can find more information about this US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) requirement at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/unpaid-meal-charges>.

II. PURPOSE OF POLICY:

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the district. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the food service department. The goals of this standard of practice are:

- To treat all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts

- To support positive situations with district staff, district business policies, student and parent/guardian to the maximum extent possible
- To establish policies that are age appropriate
- To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student
- To establish a consistent district policy regarding charges and collection of charges

III. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

- The food service department, Finance Office or Administrative Assistant: Responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the student's parent/guardian.
- The parent/guardian: Immediate payment

IV. ADMINISTRATION

1. Families are encouraged to apply for free and reduced price meal benefits at <https://irvington.familyportal.cloud/>. Any family that falls into a negative balance will receive a written notification, included with a monthly invoice from the finance department, to encourage them to apply for free or reduced price meal benefits.
2. Families are encouraged to pre-pay for meals and money is accepted in the school offices daily via cash, check, or /credit. Payments may also be made via <https://irvington.familyportal.cloud/>. Written notification of prepayment options occurs at the beginning of each school year, is given to each new transfer student, is posted on the school website, and is included in the student handbook.
3. Families will be notified of the school Unpaid Meal Charge Policy in writing before the school year begins and with each new transfer student. This policy will also be posted on the school website.
4. Full Pay Students - Will pay/be charged for meals at the district's published standard meal rate each day. Once a full pay student's account reaches zero they will be extended credit up to 10 days worth of meal purchases. Full pay accounts at zero will not be permitted to purchase extra meals or ala-carte items.

5. Reduced Meal Benefit - Will pay/be charged for meals at the district's published reduced meal rate each day. Once a reduced meal benefit student's account reaches zero they will be extended credit up to 10 days worth of meal purchases. Reduced benefit student accounts at zero will not be permitted to purchase extra or ala-carte items.

6. Free Meal Benefit - Will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch each day. Free meal benefit students will not be extended any credit and must pay for all extras and ala carte items at the time of purchase.

7. All school cafeterias possess computerized point of sale/cash register systems that maintain records of all monies deposited and spent for each student and said records are available by setting up an account at <https://irvington.familyportal.cloud/>.

How to make payments.

8. Refunds for withdrawn and graduating students will require a written request for a refund of any money remaining in their account. Requests may be made via email to the school's Administrative Assistant, the corporate Executive Assistant, the Food Service Coordinator, or any member of the Finance Department. Students graduating at the end of the year will also be given the option to transfer to a sibling's account or donate funds to the school's "Angel Fund", which helps pay delinquent student lunch account balances.

9. Unpaid meal charges will be carried over at the end of the school year (i.e., beyond June 30) as a delinquent debt if an approved repayment plan is in place.

10. If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the administration will investigate the situation more closely and take further action as needed. If financial hardship exists, parents and guardians are encouraged to apply for free or reduced benefits at <https://irvington.familyportal.cloud/>.

V. COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

1. Families receive automated emails when their students' lunch account balance is below \$16.20 (full pay) or \$4.20 (reduced).
2. The front office staff in each building will make phone calls to parents of students with negative lunch balances reminding them to add funds to the student's account. At (Full - \$32.40, Reduced - \$4.20) or more Front Office, Counselors and Assistant Principals get a report of students approaching their credit limit.
3. The finance department will mail monthly invoices to parents of students with negative account balances.

VI. DEFINITIONS

1. A “Breakfast meal” is one entrée and a juice
2. A “Lunch meal” is one entrée item , one side, one serving of vegetable and a milk or juice
3. Ala-carte is an any one of these items; extra entree, none juice or milk drink, cookie and /or chips