

Adopted: 8/29/2020

## UNPAID MEAL CHARGES POLICY

### I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students receive healthy and nutritious meals through Notre École's nutrition program and that Notre École 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 and minimize identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals as well as to maintain the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.

### II. PAYMENT OF MEALS

A. To order lunch and milk, Notre École families use an online system called **JMC**, which accepts payment with **no processing fee** via Visa, MasterCard, Discover, and American Express. One month in advance families may order school lunch from the menu provided; at this point, JMC charges the family's account. All Notre École families should have a JMC account. Even if you do not plan to order school lunch, we ask you to set up an account. This is because Notre École uses JMC for "emergency meal" charges, as well, on the rare days when students forget to bring home lunch, and we are not able to reach a parent or guardian to drop off a lunch at school. If you believe you may qualify for free or reduced price meals, before creating a JMC account, complete the Application for Educational Benefits (AEB). In approximately seven days, the school will mail you a letter confirming that your AEB has been processed.

B. If the school receives school lunch aid under Minn. Stat. § 124D.111, it must make lunch available without charge to all participating students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals regardless of account balance.

C. A student with an outstanding meal charge debt will receive a meal. If the student qualifies for free or reduced lunch, the student's account will not be charged. For other students, the student's account will be charged the cost of the emergency meal.

D. Notre École will always provide a meal that meets federal and state requirements.

E.. If a parent or guardian chooses to send in one payment that is to be divided between sibling accounts, the parent or guardian must specify how the funds are to be distributed to the students' accounts. Funds may not be transferred between sibling accounts unless written permission is received from the parent or guardian.

### III. LOW OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES – NOTIFICATION

A. The school will notify families when an emergency meal has been served to the student. An e-mail message or other form of notification including the charge is communicated to families.

B. Reminders for payment of outstanding student meal balances will not demean or stigmatize any student participating in the school lunch program.

### IV. UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

A. The school will make reasonable efforts to communicate with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Where appropriate, families may be encouraged to apply for free and reduced-price meals for their children.

B. The school will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. Unpaid meal charges are designated as delinquent debt when payment is overdue, the debt is considered collectable, and efforts are being made to collect it.

C. Negative balances of more than \$50, not paid prior to the end of a term or the beginning of the following school year, will be turned over to the Business Office for collection. Collection options may include, but are not limited to, use of collection agencies, claims in the conciliation court, or any other legal method permitted by law.

D. The school may not enlist the assistance of non-school employees, such as volunteers, to engage in debt collection efforts.

## V. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

A. This Unpaid Meal Charges policy and any pertinent supporting information shall be provided in writing (i.e., mail, email, back-to-school packet, student handbook, etc.) to:

1. all households at or before the start of each school year;
2. students and families who transfer into the school , at the time of enrollment; and
3. all school personnel who are responsible for enforcing this policy.

B. The school will post the policy on the Notre École website, in addition to providing the required written notification described above.

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. § 124D.111, Subd. 4  
42 U.S.C. § 1751 *et seq.* (Healthy and Hunger-Free Kids Act)  
7 C.F.R. § 210 *et seq.* (School Lunch Program Regulations)  
7 C.F.R. § 220.8 (School Breakfast Program Regulations)  
USDA Policy Memorandum SP 46-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies (2016)  
USDA Policy Memorandum SP 47-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments (2016)  
USDA Policy Memorandum SP 23-2017, Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q&A

**Cross References:** MSBA/MASA Model Policy 534