

**Provo City School District**  
**Policy Series 6000 Finances and Operations**

**6710 P1**

**Child Nutrition: Meal Charging**

In accordance with Provo City School District *Federally Assisted Child Nutrition Programs 6710*, the Child Nutrition Program will apply student meal charging procedures that coincide with regulations of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). By statute, the Child Nutrition Program is a self-supporting fund that shall not have a negative balance at the close of a fiscal year. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the School Nutrition Program and on the district's operating budget. This policy establishes procedures for payment, charge availability, and collection steps.

Child Nutrition Meal Charging Procedure 6710 P1: All children may receive the nutrition they need to learn and stay focused during the school day. Children will receive breakfast and lunch at no charge if categorically eligible or qualified for free meals based on annual Federal income guidelines. Parents of children who do not qualify for free meals may purchase meals at the subsidized reduced-price rate or paid rate.

Procedure for Implementation:

1. All enrolled students have access to regular, reimbursable school meals that meet the nutrition standards required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA).
2. Breakfast or lunch may never be denied because of a student's inability to pay for the meal at time of service (e.g., no money in lunch account or in hand).
3. Household income applications (e.g., paper and online) and information on how to apply for free and reduced-price meals will be made available to all families annually before the start of school and throughout the school year as required.
  - a. Clerks will make every effort to engage households who have not applied or who were not previously eligible in the school year and assist them with the school meal application process.
  - b. The Clerk (and CNP Financial Secretary) will proactively ensure that children who actually are eligible for meal benefits do not incur charges.
4. Meal charging policy and procedures are available annually to all families. Procedures will be included in the Household Income Application packet, and a link will be included as part of the online application process.

Elementary School Clerks

1. Parents or guardians have the ability to view and manage their student's account(s) online (e.g., view account balances, add money to child's account, receive low balance alerts, and set up automatic payments). Online payments are convenient, secure and easy.
2. When a student has *five* meals remaining on their account, the Clerk will begin to notify the parent or guardian with a low balance alert and document as needed.
3. A robocall will go out weekly to parents or guardians who have a low or negative school meal balance. A robocall may occur more frequently if needed.
4. When a student reaches a negative account balance, the Clerk will establish a \$10.00 charge limit (about 5 meals) for the child. The school Principal will become actively involved at this time.
5. The Clerk will notify the parent or guardian with a negative balance alert. If the Clerk is unable to contact a parent or guardian about their child's account, the Clerk will send a negative balance

notification letter through U.S. Mail to the home address on record. The clerk will document.

6. Meals will never be taken from a student.
7. Clerks will not involve students with lunch money issues or embarrass children over unpaid school lunch bills (e.g., stigmatize students by stamping hands, use stickers or wristbands, send notes home via students, throw away food already served to a child, provide alternative meals, etc.).
8. The CN Clerk will make every effort to keep charges at a zero balance (e.g., contact parents or guardians, mail notification letters, actively communicate situations with school Principal, continue collection efforts on inactive student debt, etc.).
9. If the Clerk and school Principal are unable to collect on meal charges and a student's negative balance continues to accrue, the collection process will begin.
  - a. When the charge amount exceeds (\$10.00), the Clerk will send a letter to the parent or guardian via Certified Mail detailing collection procedures and requesting immediate payment. Regular collection efforts will continue.
  - b. When the parent or guardian has not made any payments in an effort to reduce the negative balance or fail to bring the meal account current within thirty-days, the school Administrator may refer the account to a collection agency. The Clerk will notify the parent or guardian of the decision through the email address on record or U.S. Mail if an email is not available before this action takes place. Notification of adverse action by phone is not allowed. The parent or guardian is given 10-calendar days from the notice date to respond before the collection referral is made. Document.
  - c. When a student's meal account is not current at the end of the school year, the school Administrator may take one of the following actions:
    - Continue collection efforts of their own, or
    - Refer the account to a collection agency.
10. Donations specifically made toward meal debt will be dispersed at the end of the school year among each school's negative account balance before the schools are debited for unpaid meal charges. Donations made toward a particular school for unpaid meal charges will be applied as requested by the donor.
11. Schools will compensate the Nonprofit School Food Service Account for all end of year meal debt from the operating budget. All recovered funds through collection efforts after this point will reimburse the school's expense.

### **Secondary School Clerks**

Will follow the same procedures listed above for Elementary Clerks except:

1. When a student has *three* meals remaining on their account, the Clerk will begin to notify the parent or guardian with a low balance alert and document as needed.
2. The Clerk may remind secondary students that their lunch account has a low balance or that they have a negative balance and owe money.
3. The Clerk may ask secondary students to bring lunch money in to replenish their meal account.
4. When a student has reached a \$10.00 charge limit, the school Principal will become actively involved.
5. If the Clerk and school Principal are unable to collect on meal charges and a student's negative balance continues to accrue, the collection process will begin (see process under elementary school clerks). In addition:
  - a. When an account balance reaches (\$50.00), the school Administrator may choose to prohibit student participation or other students from the student's household from participating in any current or *future* fee or charge-based program, subject to Policy 6160, until the delinquent balance is paid in full.

- b. When a senior's meal account is not current as of May 1<sup>st</sup>, the school Administrator may choose to prohibit participation in senior student activities including graduation exercises.
6. Donations specifically made toward meal debt will be dispersed at the end of the school year among each school's negative account balance before the schools are debited for unpaid meal charges. Donations made toward a particular school for unpaid meal charges will be applied as requested by the donor.
7. Schools will compensate the Nonprofit School Food Service Account for all end of year meal debt from the operating budget. All recovered funds through collection efforts after this point will reimburse the school's expense.

Legal References:

[National School Lunch Program \(NSLP\)](#)

[Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010](#)

[Code of Federal Regulations 7 CFR245.5](#)

Adoption Date:

August 29, 2017