

Policy 710.04: Meal Charges

Status: ADOPTED

Original Adopted Date: 01/17/2018 | **Last Revised Date:** 10/16/2024 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 03/24/2025

In accordance with state and federal law, the Southeast Valley Board of Education has adopted 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

Each family/student has a computerized family meal account which their student's meal transactions are deducted from. Meal accounts are meant to be depositories for maintaining a positive balance from which to draw for meals. When an account balance reaches a negative balance of \$25.00 for an individual student or \$50.00 per family, a student shall not be allowed to charge further meals or a la carte items until the negative account balance is paid. Parents will be notified when children cannot participate in the school meal program and they should bring their own lunch.

- Pay Schools is a pre-payment system whereby students' families/guardians can pre-pay for reduced and paid meals as well as ala carte foods.
- Parents/Guardians may monitor student accounts from home via their JMC Parent Access Portal.
- Online payments can be made by e-check, debit, or credit card with Pay Schools through the JMC/PaySchool link on the Southeast Valley Schools website - www.southeastvalley.org
- Cash or check payments are accepted at our child's school office.
- Both Districts utilize the automated meal balance notification feature, when a meal balance reaches below \$15.00 an email notice is sent to parents/guardians.
- Printed notices are also periodically sent home from the building offices when payment is needed.

Students who qualify for free meals shall never be denied a reimbursable meal, excluding ala carte purchases, even if they have accrued a negative balance from previous purchases.

Employees will have a computerized meal account, but may charge no more than \$25.00 to this account. When an account reaches this limit, an employee shall not be allowed to charge further meals or ala carte items until the negative account balance is paid.

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 a severe amount. Families will be notified via the automated email notification system or letter. Telephone calls will be made by the school building secretaries when an account reaches a negative balance of \$25.00 for an individual student or \$50.00 per family.

Negative balances of more than \$100.00, not paid prior to end of each trimester 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 via student handbooks and electronically during on-line registration 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.