

SCHOOL MEAL ACCOUNT CHARGES AND COLLECTIONS

All Students

A student will always be permitted to select and receive one of the standard school meal options that is offered on the daily menu if either of the following apply:

1. The District has determined that the student is currently eligible to receive free meals at school; or
2. The student has sufficient funds to pay for the meal as of the time the meal is purchased, even if the student's account currently has an unpaid negative balance from prior charges.

Access to School Meals

When a student wishes to purchase a school meal or any other food service items, but does not have enough money to pay for the items at the time of service, the District's food service account system normally allows the student to charge up to \$30 in his/her account as a negative balance before the District will take steps to restrict the student's food choices.

Students who are not eligible for free school meals, who do not have money to pay for their food, who are not permitted to charge items, and who do not bring food from home will be offered an alternate meal.

Consequences for Abuse of Privileges

School officials will address any possible abuse of the privilege of charging food service costs and, if applicable, any overuse of the alternate meal option with the student's parent or guardian. The District may suspend one or both of these privileges if the District determines that there has been an abuse of the privilege.

Collection Procedures for Food Service Debts

The District strongly encourages school families to establish and regularly fund a prepaid school food service account for each student in the household. A negative balance in a student food service account is a debt that is owed by the student's parent or guardian (or, if applicable, by an adult student).

Once a student's account has a negative balance, the District will make an initial and at least one documented follow-up attempt to collect the debt by providing a person responsible for payment with notice (e.g., by mail, email, telephone, or a similar method) of the amount owed. Payment is due immediately upon notice. If these attempts are not successful, a school official will attempt to make a person-to-person telephone contact or schedule an in-person meeting with a person responsible for payment. The parties may discuss payment plan options. If a negative balance still has not been paid after the previous steps:

1. Debt in a student food service account is not automatically discharged, forgiven, or reduced at the end of the school year or due to a change in a student's enrollment status (e.g., graduates, transfers, drops-out, etc.).
2. At its discretion, the District may continue to pursue collection efforts.
3. To the extent permitted by law, the District may attempt to achieve collection of a food-service-program debt by referring the debt to a collection service, initiating an action in small claims court, or pursuing other legal action. Costs associated with such actions may be added to the debt that is owed. However, before the District takes any of the steps identified in this paragraph, the District will communicate the intended course of action to a person responsible for payment and provide a final notice of the amount due.
4. The District Administrator and the Business Office Manager shall review all outstanding obligations and approve for write-off any debt which they determine remains non-collectable at the end of each fiscal year.

Referral to Social Services

Parents, guardians, and other caregivers must plan for their children to have adequate access to food and nutrition. Where a District employee suspects that a responsible adult's actions or inactions may constitute a failure, refusal, or inability to provide necessary care or food for the child that endangers the child's physical health or the child's ability to attend school, the employee may conclude that he/she is required to file a report with or make a referral to an appropriate social services agency.

Additional Information and Assistance

For assistance with all issues and questions related to the District's food service program, including eligibility and applications for free or reduced-price meals, student food service accounts, payment methods, the District's online account management system, as well as the specific issues addressed in these procedures, school families can refer to the district website (www.highland.k12.wi.us) or contact any of the following:

Josh Tarrell, PK-12 Principal	jtarell@highland.k12.wi.us	608-929-4525
Linda Hebgen, Business Office Manager	lhebgen@highland.k12.wi.us	608-929-4525
Sharon Friederick, School Nurse	sfriederick@highland.k12.wi.us	608-929-4525

Adopted: January 10, 2018