



534 SCHOOL MEALS POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students receive healthy and nutritious meals through the charter school's nutrition program and that charter school employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. The policy of the charter school is to provide meals to students in a respectful manner and to maintain the dignity of students by prohibiting lunch shaming or otherwise ostracizing the student. 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 a la carte items or second meals as well as to maintain the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.

II. MEAL SERVICE

LIFE Prep participates in the Minnesota Free School Meals Program, and therefore all enrolled students will be offered one breakfast and one lunch at no charge while at school regardless of

an outstanding meal balance. Once a meal has been placed on a student's tray or served, it will not be taken away by the cashier or any school official, regardless of a student's meal account status. All reimbursable meals offered meet state and federal guidelines. We will not provide an alternate meal unless related to a dietary need.

II. PAYMENT OF MEALS

A. Any a la carte items or second meal purchases are to be prepaid before meal service begins. Families can add money to student's lunch accounts at the front desk during school hours. A student who does not have sufficient funds will not be allowed to charge a la carte items or a second meal until additional money is deposited in the student's account.

B. Free School Meals Program

1. The free school meals program is created within the Minnesota Department of Education.
2. Each school that participates in the United States Department of Agriculture National School Lunch program and has an Identified Student Percentage at or above the federal percentage determined for all meals to be reimbursed at the free rate must participate in the federal Community Eligibility Provision in order to participate in the free school meals program.
3. Each school that participates in the free school meals program must:
 - a. participate in the United States Department of Agriculture School

Breakfast Program and the United States Department of Agriculture National School Lunch Program; and

- b. provide to all students at no cost up to two federally reimbursable meals per school day, with a maximum of one free breakfast and one free lunch.
- c. A student who has been determined eligible for free and reduced-price meals must always be served a reimbursable meal even if the student has an outstanding debt.
- d. Once a meal has been placed on a student's tray or otherwise served to a student, the meal may not be subsequently withdrawn from the student by the cashier or other school official, whether or not the student has an outstanding meals balance.
- 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.
- f. A student may purchase a second breakfast at the nonprogram price if the student has already selected a reimbursable breakfast.
- g. A student may purchase a second lunch at the nonprogram price if the student has already selected a reimbursable lunch.

III. LOW OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES – NOTIFICATION

- A. Students will not be required to have a positive account balance to receive a free breakfast and lunch. If a student shows interest in purchasing a second meal, the charter school will make a reasonable effort to alert parents of the need to add funds to the child's account.

IV. UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

- A. The charter school will not allow students to purchase second meals if they do not have adequate funds in their account, which mean there should not be unpaid meal charges. In the case of an unpaid meal charge the school will not use an outside debt collection agency.

V. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

- A. This policy and any pertinent supporting information shall be provided in writing in the student handbook and provided to:
 - 1. all households at or before the start of each school year;
 - 2. students and families who transfer into the charter school, at the time of enrollment; and
 - 3. all charter school personnel who are responsible for enforcing this policy.
- B. The charter school will post this policy on the charter school's website, or the website of the organization where the meal is served, in addition to providing the required written notification described above.

- C. If the charter school contracts with a third party for its meal services, it will provide the vendor with its school meals policy. The charter school will ensure that any third-party provider with whom the charter school enters into either an original or modified contract after July 1, 2021, adheres to the charter school's school meals policy.

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 123B.37 (Prohibited Fees)
Minn. Stat. § 124D.111 (School Meals Policies; Lunch Aid; Food Service Accounting)
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: None