

SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM-NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES

In accordance with state and federal law, the Baxter Community School District adopts 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.

Breakfast and Lunch Policy-Staff & Grades K-12

Students have use of a meal account. When the balance reaches **-\$25.00**, a student may not be allowed to charge further meals or a la carte items until the negative account balance is paid. Parents/guardians may use the online payment system, deposit cash or check into the family account by paying at the secondary principal's office.

Students who qualify for free meals shall never be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from previous purchases. Students with outstanding meal charge debt shall be allowed to purchase a meal if the student pays for the meal when it is received. The school district may provide an alternate meal that meets federal and state requirements to students who have charged the maximum allowance to the student account and cannot pay out of pocket for a meal.

Parents will be reminded when their family account balance will fall to a negative balance within five (5) days.

Parents will be reminded on a weekly basis when their family account balance falls to a negative balance and a negative balance could result in a sack lunch, instead of a hot lunch, until the account balance is brought to a positive balance.

Adults/Parents/Guardians are encouraged to maintain a positive account balance. We encourage parents/guardians to use the online payment system to deposit funds into their family account.

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.

Upon reaching a negative balance of \$25.00 or greater, a letter from the food service cashier will be sent home to the parent/guardian informing them of the negative account balance and the student will receive a sack lunch consisting of a vegetable, fruit, and milk.

If payment is still not made after reaching a negative \$50.00 balance, the parent will receive a certified letter from the business office. The letter will state that the payment must be made immediately and that the child must bring a sack lunch to school, or risk not eating a lunch, until payment is made and further collection procedures could be pursued for payment on the account.

A contact from the food service cashier will continue to be made weekly for any negative balances.

The Superintendent and/or building principal may call any families with negative balances totaling \$75.00 or more.

Please note that money needs to be available in a child's lunch account in order for extra meals, extra/snack milks, or ala carte items to be purchased. This applies to all students, including students from families participating in the free and reduced program.

Negative balances will be carried over to the following school year. These negative balances must be paid in full prior to school starting as part of the school registration process. Parents/Guardians with accounts in arrears will be asked to send a lunch from home until the negative balances have been taken care of or a payment schedule arranged and adhered to. The school district and the Food Service department reserve the right to take any other reasonable action, including legal action, to collect the balance due in any student's account.

The policy and supporting information regarding meal charges shall be provided in writing 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.

Approved: June 19, 2017

Reviewed:

Revised: