



Unpaid Meal Charge Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the district. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the Food and Nutrition Services Department and ultimately the District's general fund.

The goals of this standard of practice are:

- To treat all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts
- To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student
- To establish a consistent district policy regarding charges and collection of charges

Procedures:

If a student, excluding those students who qualify for free or reduced meals, does not have money to purchase their meal, the following steps will be taken:

- Students will be able to charge a reimbursable meal to their account.
 - Only meals will be charged – no a la carte items will be charged.
- Parents are made aware of their child's delinquent account balance by:
 - Weekly emails sent to the email on the student's account.
 - Weekly automated phone calls to households.
 - Food and Nutrition Services office may contact parents by phone.

Payments to Food and Nutrition Services

- Parents are encouraged to make payments through our online payment company K-12 Payment Center
 - <http://capistrano.healtheliving.net/> > click on Meal Payment > Online Meal Payment
 - K-12 Payment Center allows parents to pay online and to monitor the balance in their child's account.
- Parents may pay by cash, check or credit card using our prepaid meal form
 - <http://capistrano.healtheliving.net/> > click on Meal Payment > Methods of Payment
- Parents may pay by cash but it is not recommended that the students pay their accounts with cash in the lunch line.

Free or Reduced Meal Program

- If a household is unable to pay for their child's meal, they are strongly encouraged to apply for free and/or reduced meals.
- Applications are accepted at any time throughout the year.
 - Parents are encouraged to apply online at <http://capistrano.healtheliving.net/>. Click on Meal Applications. Online applications are processed within 24 business hours.
 - Parents can also apply by completing a paper application. Paper applications can take up to 10 school days to process.

- o Households will be held accountable for any charges incurred until the application is approved. Application result letters are mailed to each household.

Policy Communication

- Families will receive a written copy of the Unpaid Meal Charge Policy at the beginning of each school year or when the family transfers to the District.
- School Administration will receive a written copy of the Unpaid Meal Charge Policy at the beginning of each school year.
- Food and Nutrition Services staff will receive training and review of the policy at the beginning of year meeting. All new hires will receive training during their new hire orientation.

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