
Policy 534 SCHOOL MEALS POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Hmong College Prep Academy (HCPA) students receive healthy and nutritious meals through the school district's nutrition program and that school district employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. The policy of the school district 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 or second meals as well as to maintain the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

In order to provide the best quality school meals to students regardless of income or participation in free or reduced-priced meals, HCPA assumes the cost of meals for every student in the district. Participating in the Federal Food and Nutrition Program- Community Eligibility Program (CEP), it allows HCPA to offer free meals to all students without charging. Students have access to breakfast and lunch and are expected to eat daily.

III. PAYMENT OF MEALS

Because HCPA offers meals free of charge to all students, the district only utilized Primero Edge POS to record daily meal counts for monthly submission to MDE for reimbursement. HCPA does not provide an opportunity for students to purchase second meals in addition to the meal(s) at no cost. No collection agencies are used to collect school lunch debt.

IV. UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

Students that participate in breakfast or lunch reimbursable meals will not be charged due to the CEP eligibility. However, if students take part in a la carte food items, a positive School Café account balance is required. HCPA's Food & Nutrition Services Department will work proactively with parents/guardians to keep them informed of their students' balances. Households will be made aware of school meal account balances and attempted collection will occur in the following manner:

- A. Households can check their students' school meal account balance by going online into School Café or by contacting the Food & Nutrition Services Department for account balances. Parents and students are required to maintain a positive balance if students wish to purchase a la carte food items.
- B. When a student's School Café account reaches a balance of \$5.00, the Food and Nutrition Services Department will attempt to make contact with the parents or guardian by phone call and letter to them that their balance is low and funds are required if they wish to continue purchasing a la carte items.

V. CURRENT/PRIOR YEAR UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

HCPA does not have unpaid meal charges because students are eligible for free meals. Students who participate in the a la carte food are required to have positive balance in their School Café account before they can purchase.

VI. SCHOOL MEAL SERVICE

- A. HCPA provides 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.
- B. Regardless of student's income or participation in free or reduced-priced meals status, HCPA does not limit a student's participation in any school activities, graduation ceremonies, field trips, athletics, activity clubs, or other extracurricular activities or access to materials, technology, or other items provided to students. HCPA is committed to foster an inclusive environment where all students can thrive and benefit and have the same opportunities to participate fully in school life, regardless of their economic status.

VII. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

- A. This policy and any pertinent supporting information shall be provided in writing (i.e., mail, email, back-to-school packet, student handbook, etc.) to all households at or before the start of each school year, students and families transfer into the school district, at the time of enrollment and all school district personnel who are responsible for enforcing this policy.
- B. HPCA will post this policy on the school district'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 HPCA contracts a third party for its meal services, it will provide the vendor with its school meals policy. HCPA will ensure that any third-party provider with whom the school district enters into either an original or modified contract after July 1, 2021, adheres to the school district's school meals policy.

VIII. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it continues to meet the goals of the Board of Directors and policy requirements for the applicable State and Federal Nutrition and reimbursement programs.

LEGAL REFERENCES:

- Minn. Stat. § 123B.37 (Prohibited Fees)
- Minn. Stat. § 124D.111 (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

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Reviewed:

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