



SCHOOL LUNCH BALANCE POLICY

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Establish clear, consistent procedures for managing lunch charges and collections
- Ensure students receive a healthy meal regardless of account status
- Communicate proactively with families about balances
- Maintain student dignity and confidentiality during meal service
- Encourage parent/guardian responsibility for managing meal accounts
- Support student accountability for purchases when age-appropriate

Standards and Procedures

1. Low Balance Notification

Parents/guardians will be notified by email and/or paper notice when a student's meal account balance drops to \$5.00 or below.

2. Negative Balance Communication

When a student's account reaches a deficit of \$25.00, the Food Service Manager or Administration will notify the parent/guardian by email or phone.

3. Meal Access for Students with Negative Balances

- Students with a negative balance greater than \$25.00 will be provided with an emergency meal unless they qualify for Free or Reduced-Price Meals.
- Students will always be served a full breakfast, regardless of account balance.
- Students may pay cash for meals even if their account is in the negative.

4. A La Carte Items

- A la carte items (e.g., extra portions, drinks, Smart Snacks) are available for purchase and are not included in reimbursable meals.
- Free & Reduced-Price Meal Students: A la carte purchases are restricted if the account balance reaches -\$10.00.
- Full-Price Meal Students: A la carte purchases are restricted if the account balance reaches -\$25.00.
- Students may pay cash for a la carte items regardless of account balance.
- Parents may request that no a la carte items be sold to their student.





5. Collections and Year-End Balances

- Uncollectable meal debt becomes the responsibility of the school and may be referred to a collection agency after multiple contact attempts.
- Negative balances must be resolved before:
 - Registering for the following school year
 - Withdrawing or exiting the school

6. Student Treatment and Communication

- Students will never be asked to call home about negative balances.
- All communication regarding account status will come from school staff or administration.
- Students will not be singled out or denied access to meals due to unpaid balances.

Compliance Reference

- USDA: Meal Charge Guidance
- Utah State Board of Education Rule R277-720

