

JONES PUBLIC SCHOOL UNPAID MEAL CHARGE POLICY

I. Purpose

The goal of Jones Public Schools is to provide students with healthy meals each day. However, unpaid charges place a large financial burden on our non-profit Food Services Department. The purpose of this policy is to insure compliance with federal reporting requirements for the USDA child Nutrition Program, and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances.

The intent of this policy is to establish uniform meal account procedures throughout the Jones Public School district. The provisions of this policy pertain to regular priced school breakfast and lunch meals only. While the USDA Child Nutrition Program does not require that a student who pays for regular priced meals be served a meal without payment, the Jones Public Schools provides this policy as a courtesy to those students in the event that they forget or lose their lunch money.

II. Policy

School Responsibility – Each school site within Jones Public School district will be responsible for notifying parents/guardians of student meal account balances on a regular basis via payment reminders, letters, e-mails and/or phone calls. Parents/Guardians will also have the ability to check their child's meal account balance online through the school computerized system.

Jones Public Schools will also make available, at any time throughout the school year, Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications in order to assist those families with little or no income to receive help in getting healthy school meals for their school age children.

Each site shall designate a school employee to coordinate the follow protocol:

1. Payment reminders for those with +\$5 to zero sent home with the student weekly.
2. E-mails for those with -.01 to -\$5 sent weekly.
3. Outstanding Balance letters in an envelope (discretion) sent home with students for those with -\$5 to -\$10.
4. Phone calls to those with -\$10 to -\$15.
5. Phone call by sites counselor to those with -\$15 to -\$20.
6. Over Charge Limit letters mailed to those with -\$20.
7. Refusal to pay should be addressed by the principal of the site.

Parents/Guardians Responsibility – It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure sufficient funds are available in their child’s school meal account to cover any purchases made by their child.

It is also the responsibility of the parent/guardian to contact the school when/if they are unable to send funds to add to their child’s meal account. If funds will not be available for a length of time they should also request a Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application to see if their family will qualify for assistance in a timely manner to ensure excessive charges are not added to their child’s meal account.

Students Responsibility – The student should not be held responsible for adding funds to their meal account. However, the student should be able to give their parent/guardian any communication sent by the school via payment reminder or letter. Younger students should be asked by their parent/guardian on a regular basis if they received anything for them.

Full and Reduced-Price Students – Students with full or reduced-price meal statuses will pay for meals at the district’s published standard rate each day. A student will be allowed to charge a maximum of \$20.00 which is equivalent to one week worth of breakfasts and lunches.

Free Students – Students that are on the free meal program will receive breakfast and lunch at no charge. However, a la carte purchases must be prepaid. A la carte purchases are beverages purchased in addition to or without a meal.

Meal Account Payments – **Elementary** students are able to pay for school meals by bringing cash, check or money order and turn it in to their teacher, the front office, or the foodservice office. Parents/Guardians can also bring in or mail a check to the school. **Middle School** students can turn cash, check or money order in to the front office. **High School** students can turn cash, check or money order in at the cafeteria.

Outstanding Meal Account Balances – If a student has an outstanding meal account balance on a regular basis, the administration will investigate the situation more closely and take further action as needed. If financial hardship exists, parents/guardians will be encouraged to apply for free and reduced-price meals for their child if they haven’t already done so.