

## **Food Service Meal Charges**

Unless meals are provided at no charge, Heber Springs School District expects students and employees to pay for their meals prior to or at the time of service. The ability to charge meals is a privilege, not a right, and is subject to the limitations established in the following procedure:

### **EMPLOYEES**

1. Employees may charge meals only after completing the form provided by the Heber Springs School District authorizing the district to withhold the amount of unpaid charges from the employee's pay.
2. The district will withhold amounts due for charged meals in the employees last pay period.

### **STUDENTS**

1. A student may not accumulate more than six (6) unpaid meal charges.
2. A student who has accumulated six (6) unpaid meal charges and is still unable to pay for meals will be provided a substitute meal that meets the USDA guidelines.
3. Substitute meals provided to the student will be charged to the student's meal account.
4. A student with money in hand will not be denied a meal even if the student has past due charges.
5. No student will be singled out, shamed or punished for the failure of their parent/guardian to pay for the provided meals. The district will not hold student records in violation of law.
6. Students may not charge ala carte' or extra items.

### **INTERVENTIONS**

1. After three (3) unpaid meal charges, the food service cashier or school manager will call the number supplied by the student's family to notify them of the meal charges.
2. After four (4) unpaid meal charges, an e-mail or phone call will be made by the cashier manager or food service director to the parent/guardian encouraging the family to submit an application for free or reduced meals if an application has not already been submitted. Any assistance needed by the family to complete the form will be provided.
3. After six (6) unpaid meal charges, the student will be referred to a counselor in their school to assess whether or not the family is experiencing hardships or circumstances with which the counselor could offer assistance. The counselor may provide other resources as applicable.
4. All correspondence made by food service will be documented.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN NOTIFICATIONS**

- 1. Elementary parents/guardians will receive two (2) notifications per week sent home with the student when negative balances occur. After meals on Monday and Thursday, the charge slip will be placed in the teacher mailbox to be sent home with the student.**

**Middle and high school parents/guardians will receive a phone call notifying them when the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) meal charge occurs. Continued calls will be made as long as the student balance is negative.**

- 2. Monthly invoices will be sent to parents/guardians for any unpaid meals accumulated by their child during the monthly billing cycle. Elementary student invoices will be sent home with the student. Middle and high school student invoices will be mailed.**
- 3. Heber Springs School District will turn over unpaid meal charges to a collection agency when the superintendent determines such action is in the best interest of the district.**
- 4. District employees are mandated by the state of Arkansas to report any instances of suspected abuse or neglect to the Children's Division of the Department of Social Services. District personnel will report to the Children's Division any instance where the parent/guardian has made no provision for food that leads to a reasonable cause to suspect neglect.**

