

*Adopted: October 9, 2017*

*Revised: \_\_\_\_\_*

## **534. UNPAID MEAL CHARGES**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent district practices for the provision of meals to students who have insufficient funds in their school meal accounts and the collection of unpaid meal debt.

### **II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

A. Blackduck Public School's goal is to provide nutritious meals to students to promote healthy eating habits and enhance learning as well as maintain the financial integrity of the National School Breakfast and Lunch program and eliminate stigmatization of children who are unable to pay meal charges.

B. It is the policy of Blackduck Public School to offer breakfast and lunch meals that meet state and federal guidelines.

C. Families may add money to their lunch accounts by making a cash or check payment to any of the Blackduck School Offices. Payment may also be made by credit card using the school's online payment system, LunchPrepay.com

D. Families may apply for free/reduced-price meal benefits anytime during the school year. Meal applications are distributed to all families in the district prior to the student's first day of classes. In addition, applications are available at all school district offices during normal business hours. If household income or size change, families can apply for meal benefits anytime during the school year.

### **III. CHARGE POLICY**

A. If the student or family account has insufficient funds to pay for breakfast and/or lunch meals, students will still receive mainline meals and the District Office will contact the families for payment of these charges. Students with an overdrawn account are not allowed to charge ala carte items.

B. Students eligible for free or reduced-price meals will always be served a meal regardless of unpaid food service accounts. When a student eligible for PAID meals has "cash in hand" to pay for a meal, the student will be served a meal regardless of unpaid foodservice accounts. The "cash in hand" will not be applied towards past due balances.

#### **IV. NOTIFICATION OF ACCOUNT STATUS**

A. Families can check their student's meal account balance on ParentVue/K-12 Payment Center. They may also contact the District Office for account balances. Households will be regularly apprised of student meal account balances by the school's automated calling system, SchoolMessenger.

B. The student/family will be notified by SchoolMessenger on Wednesdays and Sundays, when full pay accounts fall below \$20 and free/reduced accounts fall below \$10. A letter/invoice will be sent via US Post to the household requesting payment of the account. A second request for payment will be made by phone if parents have not responded to the first request. Notification methods may be different depending on individual circumstances.

C. The Food Service Department will encourage parents to complete the free/reduced meal application

#### **V. COLLECTION OF UNPAID MEAL DEBT**

When the student meal balance is in the negative the following collection actions will be taken:

1. The Administrative Secretary will contact the household to request payment. If no payment is received, a formal letter will be sent, by certified mail, notifying that the debt will be turned over to a collection agency.
2. The expectation is that all fees owed to the School District will be paid in full on the last day that the student is attending classes.

#### **VI. COMMUNICATION POLICY**

- A. This policy and any pertinent supporting information shall be provided in writing (i.e., mail, back-to-school packet, student handbook, etc) to:
1. all households at or before the start of school each year,
  2. students and families who transfer into the school district, at the time of enrollment; and
  3. all school district personnel who are responsible for enforcing this policy.
- B. The School District may post the policy on the school district's website in addition to providing the required written notification described above.