

**Dickinson Public School District Unpaid Meal Fee Guidelines**

Dickinson Public School District recognizes the important link between proper nutrition and academic success. The purpose of these guidelines is to establish a consistent District procedure for charging meals when parents do not have sufficient funds to pay for the meals, and ensuring eligible children are certified for free and reduced-price school meals.

**Charging meals:**

Because hunger is an impediment to learning, no student shall be denied a school meal because of an inability to pay. Children will be served a meal that meets the U.S. Department of Agriculture nutrition standards for school meals.

**Alternatives:**

Schools may offer students unable to pay for a regular menu meal or a lower-cost alternate meal that meets nutrition standards, but does not overtly identify children. Dickinson Public Schools (DPS) may allow students to charge reimbursable meals up to a certain number of meals or dollar amount and then provide an alternate meal thereafter. Hand stamps, stickers, or any other means of overt identification of children with unpaid meal debt are prohibited. Additionally, children with unpaid meal debt shall not be required to work off their debt.

To ensure that all eligible families are certified for free and reduced-price school meals, the District or school officials shall provide all households with school meal applications at the time of registration or enrollment and/or include instructions for completing online school meal applications.

Data provided by the state or other school district officials to certify eligible children without an application will be promptly utilized.

If DPS becomes aware of a student that is eligible for free or reduced meals and is unable to obtain a completed application, DPS shall certify the free or reduced based on an application submitted by the appropriate school official, as permitted by the USDA guidance.

To ensure that households are aware of negative account balances and the potential to accrue meal debt, a school official will send out low balance notices prior to students needing to charge meals; when the student's meal account balance is at +\$10.00. This will ensure enough funds to cover the student's breakfast and lunch. School officials will notify and/or work with principals, school counselors, and/or teachers to understand the student and parent's situation and if a school meal application is needed. School officials will utilize email and/or text to notify parents of negative balances.

Daily notices will be sent home with the students; at the end of the school year notifying the parent or guardian of the amount needed to provide meals through the end of the school year.

When a student's meal balance is at -\$10.00, a phone call will be made to the parents and a free and reduced lunch application form will be offered to the parents. Every third day thereafter, an attempt will be made to contact the parents by phone and a letter with a form will be sent home with the student.

Schools do have the option of informing the parents or guardians that the students will have to bring cold lunch after a meal debt is \$50 or more. If the student forgets to bring cold lunch, meals will continue to be provided to the student.

Parents that enroll their child after the beginning of the school year should notify the school if they qualified for free and reduced meals at their prior school.

**End of Dickinson Public School District #1 Exhibit ABEB-E2.....12/31/2020**