

Notre Dame Academy's Unpaid Meal Charge and Debt Collection Process

Purpose

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

General Statement of Policy

1. Notre Dame Academy'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 Lunch program and eliminate stigmatization of children who are unable to pay meal charges.
2. It is the policy of Notre Dame Academy to offer lunch meals that meet state and federal guidelines.
3. Once a lunch account goes negative Notre Dame Academy's charge policy and procedures will go into effect.
4. Notre Dame Academy will maintain the dignity of students by prohibiting lunch shaming or otherwise ostracizing the student.

Charge Policy & Procedure

1. If the student lunch account has insufficient funds to pay for lunch meals, Notre Dame Academy will allow the student to take hot lunch, but not *extra entree or extra milk*.
2. Once staff have placed a meal on a tray or otherwise served the meal to a student, the meal may not be subsequently withdrawn from the student by the cashier or other school official, whether or not the student has an outstanding meal balance.
3. Students will always be served a meal regardless of unpaid food service accounts.
4. Any reminders for payment of outstanding student meal balances will not demean or stigmatize any child participating in the school lunch program, including but not limited to dumping meals, withdrawing a meal that has been served, announcing or listing students' names publicly, or affixing stickers, stamps, or pins.
5. It is the household's responsibility to notify Notre Dame Academy's Administration if special circumstances are preventing meal payments to be made.

Notification of Account Status

1. Households can check their lunch account balances anytime by visiting Educate, NDA's student management system, or by emailing the Cafeteria Manager: cafeteria@nda-mn.org.
2. Debt Collection Procedure:

Households will be made aware of lunch account balances by the following:

- a. The Food Service Department will send weekly, automated e-mails to households advising of student lunch balances under \$15.
- b. Once a lunch account goes below negative \$10, the Cafeteria Manager will send a personal email addressing the insufficient account.
- c. If a lunch account goes below negative \$40, a letter will be mailed to the household along with a note from the Principal.
- d. If no payment has been received a week later, a phone call will be made to the household from the Principal or Business Administrator.
- e. At negative \$50, the household will receive an email from the Business Administrator that their TADS account will be charged.
- f. After the first TADS charge, due to an unpaid balance, a service fee will be charged for each subsequent occurrence.

