

**INTERNATIONAL FALLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT #361**

**BOARD POLICY 534  
School Meals Policy**

Adopted \_\_\_ By Reference \_\_\_

Revised: July 2023

*[Note: In 2021, the Minnesota legislature amended Minnesota Statutes section 124D.111, to require that Minnesota school districts that participate in the national school lunch program must adopt a school meals policy. In 2023, the Minnesota legislature amended the statute to create the free school meals program.]*

*[Note: This MSBA/MASA model policy is drafted to be consistent for all grade levels. However, local school districts may vary the meal charge policy for elementary, middle, and high schools.]*

*[Note: School districts must follow appropriate debt collection practices when attempting to recover unpaid a la carte items or second meal charges.]*

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students receive healthy and nutritious meals through the school district's nutrition program and that school district employees, families and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. The policy seeks to allow students to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day and minimize identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for a la carte items or second meals as well as to maintain the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.

**II. PAYMENT OF MEALS**

- A. All a la carte items or second meal purchases are to be prepaid before meal service begins. Students are assigned a meal account when they enroll in International Falls Public Schools. It is the parent/guardians responsibility to make sure adequate funds are available in their student(s) account each day for breakfast and/or lunch. It is recommended to have at least a week's worth of meals prepaid in the student's account.
- B. Parent(s) or guardian(s) can manage their student(s) meal accounts through online access via Skyward Family Access. The link for Skyward Family Access is found on

the district website at [www.isd361.k12.mn.us](http://www.isd361.k12.mn.us) under “Quick Links” then select “Skyward Portal”. Family Access allows parent(s) or guardian(s) the ability to:

1. View meal account balances
2. Make payments to student account(s)
3. Set a low balance message
4. View student meal account purchases

If parent(s) or guardian(s) do not have a user name setup for Skyward Family Access they can contact the school office to have this setup.

C. Student meal account payments can be made as follows:

1. Pay by credit or debit card online through Skyward Family Access or via ISD 361 web store offered through RevTrak. The link to either system is located on district website under “Quick Links”. There is a \$1 transaction fee applied to all online payments.
2. Send cash or check with student to school.
3. Mail or drop off cash or check to your student’s school.
4. By setting up reoccurring payments:
  - a) Reoccurring payments allow parent(s) or guardian(s) to set a minimum meal account balance which will trigger an automatic payment to the student(s) account. An email notification is sent to the parent(s) or guardian(s) each time a payment is made.
  - b) To setup reoccurring payments go to ISD 361 web store: Log into personal account then setup reoccurring payments for each student. At the end of school year remove the reoccurring payment option on your account.
  - c) If parent(s) or guardian(s) do not have a web store account setup they can contact the school office to have this setup.

If the school district participates in the United States Department of Agriculture National School Lunch program and has an Identified Student Percentage below the federal percentage determined for all meals to be reimbursed at the free rate via the Community Eligibility Provision must participate in the free school meals program.

D. A school that participates in the United States Department of Agriculture National School Lunch program and has an Identified Student Percentage at or above the federal percentage determined for all meals to be reimbursed at the free rate must participate in the federal Community Eligibility Provision in order to participate in the free school meals program.

E. Each school that participates in the free school meals program must:

(1) participate in the United States Department of Agriculture School Breakfast Program and the United States Department of Agriculture National School Lunch Program; and

(2) provide to all students at no cost up to two federally reimbursable meals per school day, with a maximum of one free breakfast and one free lunch.

- F. Once a meal has been placed on a student's tray or otherwise served 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 meals balance.
- G. If a parent or guardian chooses to send in one payment that is to be divided between sibling accounts, the parent or guardian must specify how the funds are to be distributed to the student's accounts.
- H. Transferring of funds between student sibling accounts requires the approval of the parent or guardian. Graduating senior student account balances will be automatically transferred to a sibling at the end of school year. Parent(s) or guardian(s) with graduating students will be requested to advise the school office if they want their positive senior students account balance refunded, or transferred to the districts meal donation account.

## **II. MEAL ACCOUNT PURCHASES**

Students may purchase second meals or ala carte items when funds have been deposited into their meal account.

Ala Carte Purchases: The Falls High School cafeteria offers ala carte items for purchase. Students will not be allowed ala carte purchases if their meal account does not have a prepaid balance to cover the cost of purchase.

Parent(s) or guardian(s) may choose to block items from being purchased, such as extra milk and ala carte items by contacting Michelle Hopkins at 218-283-2571 ext. 1181 or via email at [mhopkins@isd361.org](mailto:mhopkins@isd361.org)

Second Meal Purchases: Any second (2<sup>nd</sup>) breakfast or lunch meal purchased by any student regardless of meal application status or kindergarten free breakfast status will be charged at the second meal price. Students must have positive meal account balance to purchase the second (2<sup>nd</sup>) meal.

## **III. LOW OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCE NOTIFICATION**

- A. Parent(s) or guardian(s) are encouraged to utilize Skyward Family Access to manage their student(s) meal account(s). A mobile application for Family Access is also offered by Skyward.
- B. The school district will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low or fall below zero as follows. Parent(s) or guardian(s) can also set a low balance email notification via Skyward Family Access.
- C. Parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified when the student account is at \$10.00 or less via the district telephone and e-mail notification system on Tuesday of each week.
- D. Parent(s) or guardian(s) will be notified when a student account is at negative -\$10.00 via the district telephone/e-mail notification system on Monday of each week.

E. Reminders for payment of outstanding student meal balances will not demean or stigmatize any student participating in the school lunch program.

**Policy for Meal Accounts with \$0 or Negative Balances:**

Meal Account Balances at negative -\$25.00

A meal statement will be sent requesting payment within 30 days. Invoices will be sent electronically to the parent(s) or guardian(s) guardians email address on file. If no email address is on file an invoice will be mailed to the address on file.

The district will continue to serve these students a first quantity breakfast and/or lunch meal. Second quantity meals and ala carte purchases will be denied.

Meal Account Balances at Negative -\$50.00 or more

A meal statement will be sent requesting payment within 30 days. Invoices will be sent electronically to the parent(s) or guardian(s) guardians email address on file. If no email address is on file an invoice will be mailed to the address on file.

The district will continue to serve these students a first quantity breakfast and/or lunch meal. Second quantity meals and ala carte purchases will be denied.

Meal Account Balances at Negative -\$100 or more

When a student's meal account balance reaches negative -\$100 the parent/guardian will receive a final notification from the Districts Business Manager to make payment to resolve the outstanding balance due to District within 10 days. If this notification does not result in a consistent payment plan by the parent(s) or guardian(s) any amounts owed at negative -\$100 or more will be sent to collections.

The district will continue to serve these students a first quantity breakfast and/or lunch meal. Second quantity meals and ala carte purchases will be denied.

**IV. UNPAID MEAL CHARGES**

The school district will make reasonable efforts to communicate and work with families to resolve the matter of unpaid meal charges. When appropriate, families will be encouraged to apply for meal benefits for their students.

Assistance from county social services may be requested by the building principal, food service director, school social worker or superintendent of schools for possible neglect when attempts to resolve the unpaid meal debt are not successful or disregarded by the parent(s) or guardian(s).

The school district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. Unpaid meal charges are designated as delinquent debt when payment is overdue, the debt is considered collectable, and efforts are being made to collect it.

Collection options for delinquent unpaid meal accounts may include, but are not limited to, use of collection agencies, claims in conciliation court, or any other legal methods permitted by law.

During the year meal statements will be sent monthly to families with unpaid balances due to non-payment of meal charges, meal charges incurred prior to qualifying for meal benefits, negative balances incurred during a lapse in meal benefits, or the student has left the district with a negative lunch balance. Meal statements will be sent electronically to the parent(s) or guardian(s) email account on file. If no email account is on file meal statements will be mailed. Invoices will request payment within 30 days.

At the end of the school year, regardless if the meal account is “stale” or not, unpaid meal account balances will be sent meal statement requesting payment within 10 days. If no payment is made after 10 days, accounts that owe \$50 or more will be referred to the District’s collection agency.

The school district may not enlist the assistance of non-school district employees, such as volunteers, to engage in debt collection efforts.

The school district may not deny any student the opportunity to participate in graduation ceremonies or other commencement activities due to unpaid meal charges.

## **V. STAFF MEALS**

- A. Staff have the option of purchasing meals or ala carte items through a staff meal account. This option is offered to staff as a prepayment meal account. Staff meal accounts require a payroll deduction form be on file with payroll, and maintain a positive account balance. Staff with negative meal account balances will be refused service.
- B. The district provides a reoccurring payment option to staff through the online payment system via RevTrak. Staff are encouraged to utilize this option if they struggle to maintain a positive meal account.
- C. At the termination of employment any outstanding negative meal account balance will be required to be paid in full or the amount owed will be deducted from the employee’s last paycheck. Any positive meal account balance will be refunded to the staff member, or the staff member may elect to donate the balance to the districts meal donation account.

## **VI. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY**

- A. This policy and any pertinent supporting information shall be provided in writing (i.e., mail, email, back to school packet, student handbook, etc.) to:
  - 1. All households at or before the start of each school 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 will post the policy on the school district's website, in addition to providing the required written notification described above.
  - C. If the school district contracts with a third party for its meal services, it will provide the vendor with its school meals policy. The school district will ensure that any third-party provider with whom the school district enters into either an original or modified contract after July 1, 2021, adheres to the school district's school meals policy.

**Legal References:** Minn. Stat. § 123B.37 (Prohibited Fees)  
Minn. Stat. § 124D.111, (School Meals Policies; Lunch Aid; Food Service Accounting)  
42 U.S.C. § 1751 *et seq.* (Healthy and Hunger-Free Kids Act)  
7 C.F.R. § 210 *et seq.* (School Lunch Program Regulations)  
7 C.F.R. § 220.8 (School Breakfast Program Regulations)  
USDA Policy Memorandum SP 46-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies (2016)  
USDA Policy Memorandum SP 47-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments (2016)  
USDA Policy Memorandum SP 23-2017, Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q&A

**Cross References:** None