

Duchesne County School District
Policy Recommendation

Current Policy	Proposed Policy
Child Nutrition Program Meal Payment & Charge Policy A. Purpose and Background (1) National School Lunch, Breakfast, Special (Kindergarten) Milk and the After School Snack Program are federal programs in which this district participates. (2) Schools receive partial reimbursement for meals served to students who do not qualify for free meals. Parents/Guardians must make payments to a student’s account to make up the difference between the federal reimbursement and the cost of the meal. All a la carte sales, or second meals, partial meals, and milk are not reimbursable, and all cost of these a la carte items are Parent’s/Guardian’s responsibility. This also includes students that qualify for free and reduced. (3) Applications are available and accepted all year. If students qualify for free or reduced-price school lunch, their meals are reimbursed in whole or in part with federal funds. Otherwise, the meal reimbursement is minimal and parents/guardians are expected to pay for their student(s’) meals. Schools should adopt policies which minimize unpaid accounts and ensure students are not subject to punishment or stigmatization when parents fail to make school meal payments. (4) The purpose of this policy is to explain how Duchesne County School District will receive payment and notify Parents/Guardians about: money owed for student meals; of the school’s procedures for collecting accounts that are delinquent; and to assure and remind parents and school employees that students will never be confronted or embarrassed about money owed for school meals. B. School Procedures and Practices (1) Parents/Guardians will receive information from the student’s resident school: • informing parents how their students may apply and qualify for reduced-price or free meals; • Informing parents/guardians how they may provide payments for meals. • Training parents on the functions of the Automated Payment system Including such options as low balance reminders and automatic payments made from the parent’s checking account or credit card	Child Nutrition Program Meal Charging Policy In accordance with Duchesne School District Federally Assisted Child Nutrition Programs, the Child Nutrition Program will apply student meal charging procedures that coincide with regulations of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). By statute, the Child Nutrition Program is a self-supporting fund that shall not have a negative balance at the close of a fiscal year. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the School Nutrition Program and on the district’s operating budget. This policy establishes procedures for payment, charge availability, and collection steps. All children may receive the nutrition they need to learn and stay focused during the school day. Children will receive breakfast and lunch at no charge if categorically eligible or qualified for free meals based on annual Federal income guidelines. Parent/Guardian of children who do not qualify for free meals may purchase meals at the subsidized reduced-price rate or paid rate. The school receives a partial reimbursement for meals served to students who do not qualify for free meals. Parent/Guardian must make payments to a student’s account to make up the difference between the federal reimbursement and the cost of the meal. All a la carte sales, or second meals, partial meals, and milk are not reimbursable, and all cost of these a la carte items are Parent/Guardian responsibility. National School Lunch and Breakfast Program are federal programs in which this district participates Procedure for Implementation: 1. All enrolled students have access to regular, reimbursable school meals that meet the nutrition standards required by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA). 2. Breakfast or lunch may never be denied because of a student’s inability to pay for the meal at time of service (e.g., no money in lunch account or in hand). 3. Household income applications (e.g., paper and online) and information on how to apply for free and reduced-price meals will be made available to all families annually before the start of school and throughout the school year as required. ○ School Secretary will make every effort to engage households who have not applied or who were not previously eligible in the school year and assist them with the school meal application process. ○ School Secretary (and CNP) will proactively ensure that children who actually are eligible for meal benefits do not incur charges.

- (2) Schools will send a copy of the policy in registration packet and new student packets. A copy of policy can be located at www.dcsd.org , Tab, District Information School Nutrition Program.
- (3) Schools shall provide applications for free/reduced-price meals to parents. The school shall also provide the school’s designated meal prices. Accompanying the information about the prices of school meals, parents will receive an application for free and reduced-price meals. The application is available in a variety of languages at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/family-friendly-application-translations> . The school will provide paper applications for parents who do not have access to on-line forms.
- (4) If the student’s family receives benefits from the Special Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Family Employment Program (FEP) or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), the household qualifies for meals at no charge, once the school receives notice of student’s or family’s eligibility, and does not have to complete or submit a free/reduced-price form. Schools will send the household an e-mail/letter informing parents of a student’s eligibility for free meals. If a parent/guardian or family qualifies under one of these programs and has not received such a letter before school starts, the parent should contact the school food service.

C. Payments

- (1) A school will credit meal payments from parents to the student’s account before the meal period. This assures all funds are accurately applied to meal accounts in advance of students selecting school meals. Schools will apply payments to the purchase of the current day’s meal first, and the payment of past-due accounts second.
- (2) If a student/family qualifies for free meals, no payments are due. Cost of all a la carte’ items (including milk) are the responsibility of the parent/guardian. A student will not be allowed to charge al a carte’ if the child has no money in their account or a negative balance.
- (3) Parent/Guardian payment options for student meals include:
- (a) Parent/Guardian may make on-line payments, at www.dcsd.org and click on, Online Lunch Payments. First time users will need to create an account. There is an additional fee for the use of the service, which will be charged against their Debit or Credit Card at the time of the School Lunch payment.
- (b) Parent/Guardian may choose to use bill pay through their banking service. To guarantee quick posting to child/children’s account, they should supply in note section child/children information to ensure money is received in proper account.

4. Meal charging policy and procedures are available annually to all families. Procedures will be included in the Household Income Application packet, and will be included as part of the online application process.
- School Secretary
1. Parents or guardians have the ability to view and manage their student’s account(s) online (e.g., view account balances, add money to child’s account, receive low balance alerts, and set up automatic payments). Online payments are convenient, secure and easy. Cash and checks are accepted at all schools.
2. A robocall, text or email will go out multiple times weekly to parents or guardians who have a negative school meal balance.
3. School Secretary (and CNP) will notify the Parent/Guardian with a negative balance alert. If the School Secretary (and CNP) is unable to contact a Parent/Guardian about their child’s account, the School Secretary (or CNP) will send a negative balance notification letter through U.S. Mail to the home address on record. The School Secretary (and CNP) will document.
4. Meals will never be taken from a student.
5. All communications about lunch account balance will go directly thru Parent/Guardian.
6. School Secretary or CNP will not involve students with lunch money issues or embarrass children over unpaid school lunch bills (e.g., stigmatize students by stamping hands, use stickers or wristbands, send notes home via students, throw away food already served to a child, provide alternative meals, etc.).
7. The School Secretary or CNP will make every effort to keep charges at a zero balance (e.g., contact Parent/Guardian, mail notification letters, actively communicate situations with school Principal, continue collection efforts on inactive student debt, etc.).
- (f) If the School Secretary or CNP and school Principal are unable to collect on meal charges and a student’s negative balance continues to accrue, the Parent/Guardian will be notified with how we will handle this account. They may be turned over to a collection agency to collect unpaid meal balances, or if the Parent/Guardian is a staff member payroll deduction will begin.
- (g) If a student repeatedly has no money in the student’s school lunch account and no student meals are provided from home, school officials will consider the circumstances in the home (e.g., potential abuse or neglect, homelessness, etc.) and may contact the District Social Worker and/or Child Protective Services.
8. Donations specifically made toward meal debt will be dispersed at the end of the school year among each school’s negative account balance. Donations made toward a particular school for unpaid meal charges will be applied as requested by the donor.
9. For staff with outstanding lunch balances, payroll deductions may be applied. Staff will be notified before this occurs.

(c) Parent/Guardian may make payments to the school by mail or hand delivery. Payments should clearly indicate the account to which the funds should be credited (student’s name and amount, if several students attend the school). The school will indicate if the school accepts checks, money orders and/or cash. (Parents should note the school policy for checks returned to the school for insufficient funds.) (d) In the case of a returned check, the district will notify the parent in a letter and state the date that the money will be reversed out of the student’s account as to give opportunity to clear up account. E. Identification of Delinquent Accounts (1) Schools will identify family or student accounts that do not have adequate balances to pay for student meals weekly and notify parents/guardians. The school will contact parents, as parents have directed, on the automated meal payment system, or by phone, text or e-mail, to allow parents to indicate how they wish to make payments. Schools may ask students to take notifications addressed to the parent/guardian home with them; the school may remind students of low account balance, but will be sensitive as not to embarrass the student. (2) The school will use the following procedure for student meals if a student’s meal account is inadequate: (a) School staff may inform students in secondary school that students cannot charge second meals or al a cart’ items (b) Note or and alert system or some form of contact will notify parent money is due. (c) After students account falls below -\$15.00, parent will continue to be contacted with weekly notes and the alert system. Parents will also be contacted by phone by school. The school shall maintain documentation of parent notice. The school will make all attempts to contact by phone or meeting with the parent to determine the needs of the students.	Legal References and Regulations • National School Lunch Program (NSLP) • Healthy. Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 • Code of Federal Regulations 7 CFR245.5 • Food Security Amendments H. B. 100
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(d) School staff may inform students in secondary school that students cannot charge a second meal or al a cart’. (d) If account remains delinquent, the name will be turned into district office for them to contact parent/guardian. (e) If parents have been notified, no payment is received, the account may be turned over to a collection agency to collect unpaid meal balances, and (no federal funds may be used for the collection of funds) (3) The school may complete an application for free/reduced-price meals on behalf of the parents, if school personnel have knowledge of the parent’s financial circumstances and parents give permission. The school will notify parents that an application has been completed on their behalf. (4) If a student repeatedly has no money in the student’s school lunch account and no student meals are provided from home, school officials will consider the circumstances in the home (e.g., potential abuse or neglect, homelessness, etc.) and may contact the District social worker and/or Child Protective Services.	