

## MEAL CHARGES

In accordance with state and federal law, the IKM-Manning CSD adopts the following policy to ensure 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, prevent the overt identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals, and maintain the financial integrity of the nonprofit school nutrition program.

### **Payment of Meals**

Students have use of a family meal account. Payment can be made in any of the school offices. Students who qualify for free meals shall never be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from previous purchases. Schools are encouraged to provide a reimbursable meal to students with outstanding meal charge debt. If an alternate meal is provided, the meal must be the same meal presented in the same manner to any student requesting an alternate meal.

### **Negative Account Balances**

The school district will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low. Additionally, the school district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. The school district will coordinate communications with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Families will be notified of an outstanding negative balance once the student owes *five meals or more*. Families will be notified by e-mail. If an email address is not provided by the family paper low balance notices will be sent home with K-6 students or mailed.. Negative balances of more than \$50.00, not paid prior to the *end of the school year* will be turned over to the superintendent or superintendent's designee for collection. Options may include: collection agencies, small claims court, or any other legal method permitted by law.

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### **Communication of the Policy**

The policy and supporting information regarding meal charges shall be provided in writing to:

- All households at or before the start of each school year;
- Students and families who transfer into the district, at time of transfer; and
- All staff responsible for enforcing any aspect of the policy.

Records of how and when the policy and supporting information was communicated to households and staff will be retained.

The superintendent may develop an administrative process to implement this policy.

*NOTE: The IASB sample policy is drafted to be consistent for all grade levels. However, local boards may vary the meal charge policy for elementary, middle, and high schools. Districts should update the policy accordingly if they wish to delineate meal charge practices based on the grade level of students.*

*NOTE: If the district elects to provide alternate meals for students, the alternate meal must contain components available to all students and be provided in the same manner as meals are provided to other students. Additionally, the district is expected to accommodate special dietary needs when a child's disability restricts their diet.*

*NOTE: The Iowa Department of Education has tools and resources available to help districts with the school nutrition program and meal charge policy implementation and review. Please visit the "School Meals" section of the Iowa Department of Education's website.*

*NOTE: School districts must follow appropriate debt collection practices when trying to recover unpaid meal charges.*

Legal Reference: 42 U.S.C. §§ 1751 *et seq.*  
7 C.F.R. §§ 210 *et seq.*

U.S. DEP'T OF AGRIC., SP 46-2016, UNPAID MEAL CHARGES: LOCAL MEAL CHARGE POLICIES (2016).

U.S. DEP'T OF AGRIC., SP 47-2016, UNPAID MEAL CHARGES: CLARIFICATION ON COLLECTION OF DELINQUENT MEAL PAYMENTS (2016).

U.S. DEP'T OF AGRIC., SP 57-2016, UNPAID MEAL CHARGES: GUIDANCE AND Q&A (2016).

Iowa Code 283A.

281 I.A.C. 58.

Cross Reference: 710.1 School Food Program  
710.2 Free or Reduced Cost Meals Eligibility  
710.3 Vending Machine

Approved December 20, 2018

Reviewed \_\_\_\_\_

Revised \_\_\_\_\_