

Charging Policies

Charging Policies and Negative Balances

SIA believes that it is in the best interest of students to be provided nutritious meals in order to maximize learning. We do not want to see students go hungry and we realize there are extenuating circumstances in life. However, due to the nature of our federally funded National School Lunch and Breakfast program we are required to make a policy addressing the concerns of unpaid meal charges. Unpaid meal charges place a financial strain on the school and it is our goal to address this at each location in order to continue operation of our program. USDA does not require us to provide meals to students once their account is insufficient and it has been confirmed that they do not qualify for free and reduced lunch. Therefore, SIA limits individual negative account balances to (- \$15.00) for any family deemed ineligible to receive free/reduced benefits to ensure financial accountability.

Your students meal account balance is listed in Skyward Family Access. If you need assistance signing into Family Access please contact the main office. If the balance is in (parentheses) that signifies the account is a negative balance. Online payments are accepted at <https://payments.efundsforschools.com/v3/districts/56111>. Cash or personal check payments are also accepted at both locations and are deposited by the main office daily.

If at any time you are concerned about being able to pay for your child's meals please contact Morgen Flowers, Principal at Primary Academy or Nate Pelton, Principal at Middle Academy. Free and reduced meal applications are accepted at any time during the school year. **It is imperative at all grade levels that parents/guardians keep meal account balances positive.** Parents/guardians will be expected to pay delinquent debt when notified by the school of the debt.

Policy:

Primary Academy (K-5) and Middle Academy (6-8)

- Households will receive several automated meal balance notifications via email, personal phone calls, or written notice.
- No students under the age of 15 will be involved in the conversation of their meal account balance.
- Main office staff will make attempts to contact families regarding meal account balances and offer assistance with applications for free or reduced priced meals as needed.
- After the last day of school, charges cannot be altered and will be permanent on the account for that completed school year.
- **All Food Service account charges are expected to be paid by the end of the school year. All negative balances carry over from the previous year.**

For Primary and Middle Academy Students:

- No students will be denied a meal under any circumstance unless they have exceeded a negative \$15.00 balance and have been deemed ineligible to receive free/reduced benefits and are not directly certified through other state programs.
- Households are notified verbally or by email from SIA to bring money when their meal account balance is less than \$5 dollars.
- Once the student's negative balance exceeds \$15.00 the household will receive a personal call home from a designated school employee informing them of their delinquent account. Application assistance will be provided if necessary.
- Principals and school administrators will investigate the household situation to determine if further assistance is required on a case by case basis.

A La Carte Sales:

- Ala carte or extra items such as 2 milks and extra entrees cannot be purchased if a student's account is negative or if the ala carte purchase will bring the account negative.
- Students cannot purchase ala carte items if there is a block on their meal account set forth by a parent or guardian.

Families:

- All families have access to Skyward Family Access where they can check student meal balances which are updated daily.
- To ensure receipt of these notices please keep your contact information up-to-date. You can access your Skyward Family account to make any necessary changes.

For Staff:

- Meal charging is not allowed. All meals must be pre-paid. Substitute staff without Skyward accounts may pay for an adult meal through the school office in order to receive a meal.

Money Handling and Deposits

Elementary and Middle School: Cash and checks for deposit in student meal accounts will go through the Office. No payments are accepted in the food service line. Payments can be done online with a debit or credit card through a third party website called Efunds.

Lunch Account Refunds

Lunch account refunds will only be given at the end of the school year, unless the student or students are leaving the district. Amounts less than \$5 dollars will not be refunded. A request for refund form should be filled out and returned to the school office for those students wanting to get a refund.

All student and staff funds that are not refunded will carry over to the next school year.

Free and Reduced Price Meal Information

- Eligibility information must never be publicized or used in such a way that other students may recognize another student's eligibility category.
- Students receiving free or reduced-price meal benefits must not, at any time be treated differently from students who do not receive these benefits.
- The identification of free/reduced-price status must be adequately concealed during payment collection, and meal service.
- The date of when a student withdraws/transfers or when eligibility changes must be clearly and accurately noted on the free/reduced roster. It is the responsibility of the Nutrition Specialist to maintain and keep current the free/reduced roster.

Applications received for Elementary and Middle School students are processed, entered in Skyward, and a letter sent home (for denied applications only). All other notifications on status (free, reduced) are provided via email. Applications will be reviewed and an eligibility determination will be made within 10 days. After approval, all applications are kept in the office for the Nutrition Specialist to maintain. An applicant's meal price-status does not go into effect until the application has been approved.

Students with Special Nutritional Needs

- All students with special nutritional needs will need a "Diet Prescription for Meals at School" form filled out and signed by a Recognized Medical Authority. A copy (confidential) of this information is available to the Nutrition Services Staff for reference. At the elementary/middle school serving line, current pictures of these students are posted above the serving line for identification.