

## **CHILD NUTRITION MEAL CHARGE POLICY**

The School District offers nutritious school meals to students at a minimal cost. In order to avoid adversely affecting the school lunch program financially, the School Board establishes policy regarding the charging of school lunches. Negative student balances affect the ability of the lunch program to operate in a fiscally responsible manner.

The Sentinel Public School system participates in the National School Lunch Program sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) which permits the school system to offer free and reduced-priced meals to students who qualify.

- The District allows students to charge meals &/or for ala carte items such as milk, juice, and cereal. Parents/guardians are always welcome to eat breakfast/lunch with their students and are allowed to charge their meals to their students' accounts. Lunch bills are printed at the end of the month and given to either the students' homeroom or 1st hour teacher. The teacher is responsible for distributing the bills to their students.
- All bills are due by the 10th of each month following the month charged. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to pre-pay for their students meals to avoid an overdue balance. Notices of unpaid charge balances will be sent to the parents/guardians on a regular and consistent manner to avoid the lunch program carrying charge balances. All communications will be directly with the parent or guardian. Under no circumstances will a child receive a handstamp or any other physical marking to show that they have unpaid charge balances. All returned checks will be charged a \$15.00 fee.
- Parents will receive a weekly reminder via automated phone service concerning student balances every Wednesday if the balance is over \$25.00. Parents are also allowed to check their student balances through the school student information system.
- Parents who could be eligible are encouraged to apply for Free and Reduced Lunch under the federal government guidelines. Applications are available at the schools and on the district website.
- Students may bring their lunches, but are required to eat in the cafeteria. Students bringing their lunches are allowed to charge one milk or one water. Students who receive a reimbursable meal are not allowed to have soft drinks such as pop or cola with the meal.
- Elementary students are not excused to go off campus for lunch unless accompanied by a parent or designated adult.

Students will be treated with courtesy and respect regardless of whether or not the parent has provided payment to the school district. If a meal has been served to a child in error, the child will be allowed to consume the food that was provided to the student in error. Staff members will be instructed to adhere to this policy. If a staff member fails to adhere to the policy, disciplinary action shall be taken.