

St. Maries Joint School District No. 41 will use the following protocol for student and adult meal charges.

### **STUDENTS**

Charging is only to be used in an emergency. No more than five (5) charges per student are allowed. When a student charges, the student will be given a colored slip to bring home indicating that they have charged lunch, and after five (5) charges, the student will not be permitted to incur further charges. Students with accounts in arrears may continue to participate in the program on a pre-pay or cash basis only. At the District's expense, alternative meals which meets federal requirements for reimbursement will be provided to Pre-School-Kindergarten through third grade students or for any students with a disability who may be unable to take full responsibility. Students who qualify for free meals shall never be denied a reimbursable meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from previous purchases.

Notices will be sent one (1) time per month for students who have charged. Charges must be paid within five (5) days.

Students who have been approved for Free and Reduced meals are still required to pay for meals received that were charged before the meal application for meal benefits was approved.

If a school requests to extend the amount of meal charges for a student, the requesting school will be responsible for the meal charges above the limited amount.

Charges will not be allowed the last two (2) weeks of the regular school session.

### **NOTIFICATION**

The District will provide a copy of this Policy to all households at the start of school each year and to families and students that transfer into the District at the time of transfer. All District staff responsible for enforcing any aspect of the Policy shall also receive a copy of this Policy. It may also be communicated to school social workers, school nurses, the homeless liaison, or other staff members who may assist students in need. The District may also make this Policy available in student handbooks, on the District website, or by other means deemed appropriate.

### **RECORDS**

Records of how and when this Policy is communicated to households and staff will be retained.

The District shall also retain documentation of the handling of bad debt, including:

1. Evidence of efforts to collect unpaid meal charges in accordance with this Policy;
2. Evidence that the collection efforts fell within the timeframe and methods established by this Policy;
3. Financial documentation showing when the unpaid meal charge(s) became an operating loss; and
4. Evidence any funds written off as bad debt were restored to the nonprofit school food service account using non-Federal sources.

**ADULTS**

No more than five (5) charges per adult will be allowed. When an adult charges, the adult will be given a receipt with the associated charges. After five (5) charges, the adult will not be permitted to incur further charges.

**Policy Cross Reference:**

**Legal Reference:** SP 46-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies, United States Department of Agriculture

**Other Reference:** 2017 Edition: Overcoming the Unpaid Meal Challenge: Proven Strategies from our Nation's Schools, United States Department of Agriculture

Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance Q&As, March 23, 2017, United States Department of Agriculture

**Policy History:**

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