

MEAL CHARGES

In accordance with state and federal law, the Edgewood-Colesburg Community School District 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

All meal purchases are to be prepaid before meal service begins. Money can be added to the family account by dropping payment off at the elementary, Jr/Sr, or district office. Students who do not have sufficient funds shall not be allowed to charge meals or a la carte items until additional money is deposited in the student account.

Special Note: Families participating in the **USDA's Free/Reduced program** are responsible to pay for afternoon milk and ala carte items. These are NOT part of the USDA program and are not allowed to be charged unless there is money available in their account.

Elementary School:

- If a child's meal account has a negative balance, a letter or email will be sent home. The child will be allowed to continue to eat school meals. Ala carte items and afternoon milk will not be available to the child unless they have cash in hand to pay.
- If the account reaches a negative balance of \$20.00, a phone call with the parent and/or letter will be sent to arrange payment plan. It will be considered at this time if the child will be allowed to continue to eat a regular meal or if an alternate meal should be given. Ala carte items and afternoon milk will not be available to the child unless they have cash in hand to pay.
- If the account reaches a negative balance of \$30.00, an alternate meal* will be given. Ala carte items and afternoon milk will not be available to the child unless they have cash in hand to pay.

Secondary School:

- If a child's meal account has a negative balance, a letter or email will be sent home. The child will be allowed to continue to eat school meals. Ala carte items will not be available to the child unless they have cash in hand to pay.
- If the account reaches a negative balance of \$20.00, a phone call with the parent and/or letter will be sent to arrange payment plan. At this time that an alternate meal* will be given. Ala carte items will not be available to the child unless they have cash in hand to pay.

* Student is not charged for the alternate meal

Employees:

Employees may establish a meal account. If an employee chooses to charge a meal to their account the account balance should not fall below zero. If the account does go negative, ala carte or extra items will not be available unless they have cash in hand to pay. If balance reaches a negative balance of \$10, employees MUST have cash in hand to pay.

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 it goes negative by email or letter sent to the parent. Negative balances may 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.

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.

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

Adopted:

Reviewed: 02/09/2026

Revised: