



POLICY 534 – SCHOOL MEALS POLICY

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students receive healthy and nutritious meals through the Parnassus Preparatory School’s (the “School”) nutrition program, that the School employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding a la carte items or second meal charges, and to maintain the dignity of students by prohibiting lunch shaming or otherwise ostracizing the student. The policy seeks to allow students to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day and minimize the identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school a la carte items or second meals as well as to maintain the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.

II. PAYMENT OF MEALS

A. Students have use of a meal account. When the balance reaches zero, a student may charge no more than four (4) meals to this account. When an account reaches this limit, a student shall only be allowed to receive a cold lunch meal. Families may add funds to their account through the Infinite Campus Parent Portal or by bringing cash or a personal check directly to the school office.

B. If the School receives school lunch aid under Minn. Stat. § 124D.111, it must make lunch available without charge to all participating students who have been determined eligible for free or reduced-price meals regardless of account balance.

C. A student with an outstanding meal charge debt will be allowed to purchase a meal if the student pays for the meal when it is received.

D. The School may provide an alternate meal that meets federal and state requirements to a student who does not have sufficient funds in the student’s account or cannot pay cash for a meal. The School will accommodate special dietary needs with respect to alternate meals. The cost of the alternative meal can be found in the School handbook and will be charged to the student’s account or otherwise charged to the student.

E. When a student has a negative account balance, the student will not be allowed to charge a snack item.

F. If Parnassus chooses to offer separate accounts for siblings, and if a parent or guardian chooses to send in one payment that is to be divided between sibling accounts, the parent or guardian must specify how the funds are to be distributed to the students’ accounts. Funds may not be transferred between sibling accounts unless written permission is received from the parent or guardian.

G. Once a meal has been placed on a student’s tray or otherwise served to a student, the meal may not be subsequently withdrawn from the student by the cashier or other School official, whether or not the student has an outstanding meal account balance.

H. All provisions of this section apply only to meals or a la carte menu items not covered by the Minnesota Free School Meals for Kids Program.

III. LOW OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES - NOTIFICATION

- A. The School will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low or fall below zero.
- B. Families will be notified of a low balance once the balance reaches zero dollars (\$0.00). Families will be notified by weekly school email and quarterly letters mailed home.
- C. Reminders for payment of outstanding student meal balances will not demean or stigmatize any student participating in the school lunch program.

IV. UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

- A. The School will make reasonable efforts to communicate with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Where appropriate, families may be encouraged to apply for free and reduced-price meals for their children.
- B. The School will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. Unpaid meal charges are designated as delinquent debt when payment is overdue, the debt is considered collectable, and efforts are being made to collect it.
- C. Negative balances of more than fifty dollars (\$50.00) not paid before July 1st will be turned over to the Executive Director or Executive Director's designee for collection. Collection options may include but are not limited to, the use of collection agencies, claims in the conciliation court, or any other legal method permitted by law.
- D. The School may not enlist the assistance of non-School employees, such as volunteers, to engage in debt collection efforts.

V. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

- A. This policy and any pertinent supporting information shall be provided in writing (i.e., mail, email, back-to-school packet, student handbook, etc.) to:
 - 1. all households at or before the start of each school year;
 - 2. students and families who transfer into the school district at the time of enrollment; and
 - 3. all school district personnel who are responsible for enforcing this policy.
- B. The School may post the policy on the School's website in addition to providing the required written notification described above.

Legal References

- 1. Minn. Stat. § 123B.37 (Prohibited Fees)
- 2. Minn. Stat. § 124D.111 (School Meals Policies; Lunch Aid; Food Service Accounting)
- 3. 42 U.S.C. § 1751 *et seq.* (Healthy and Hunger-Free Kids Act)

4. 7 C.F.R. § 210 *et seq.* (School Lunch Program Regulations)
5. 7 C.F.R. § 220.8 (School Breakfast Program Regulations)
6. USDA Policy Memorandum SP 46-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies (2016)
7. USDA Policy Memorandum SP 47-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments (2016)
8. USDA Policy Memorandum SP 23-2017, Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q&A