

STUDENT WELLNESS POLICY: NEGATIVE MEAL ACCOUNT BALANCES

USD 353 Wellington's policy is to ensure negative impact on student's education is reduced through the policy of negative account balances. The negative account balances will focus on communication with parents and guardians for providing funding.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Parents are responsible for ensuring there are adequate funds to cover their child's meals each day. If there is financial difficulty in the household, free and reduced lunch applications are available at each school building and on the district website.
2. All school food service policies will be reviewed and approved by the board for changes.

COMMUNICATION

1. The negative account balances policy is made available at all times on the district website and is provided in writing to households at the beginning of the year during enrollment. Periodically a reminder of the policy will be made available to all district households.
2. Parents are encouraged to sign up for a parent portal through Infinite Campus to check the funds in their student's account.
3. Communications will be sent home with elementary students at least 3 times per week when the student account is low or negative. Communication is sent home with students at the middle school level at least twice per week or as time allows during shortened school weeks. Low lunch account balances are verbally communicated daily with students at the high school level.

DEBT COLLECTION

1. Account balances are sent home at least twice a week to elementary students and up to daily with low/negative account balance reminders. Once the account is over \$10 negative, the parent is notified via email or phone of the account status.
2. Middle School students are allowed to call parents once the account is \$15 negative. Food Service or office staff will assist the student in completing the call. Students will receive a lunch on the day they call home, but need to bring lunch money or a sack lunch the following day. Parents will also be directed to the free and reduced lunch application online and in the school office.
3. High School students are allowed to call parents once their account is \$5 negative. Food Service or office staff will assist the student in completing the call. Students will receive a lunch on the day they call home, but need to bring lunch money or a sack lunch the following day. Parents will also be directed to the free and reduced lunch application online and in the school offices.
4. If a family has a negative account balance, but applies for free/reduces lunches and qualifies, USD 353 will make every effort to work out payment arrangements to bring the account current. Repayment efforts can be made with the food service clerk.

BAD DEBT

1. Food service debt will be carried from year to year and within schools across the district. The student will not receive a diploma until all food service/fees/other debt is paid.
2. If a debt becomes uncollectible because a student has moved from the district, funds generated through the "Random Acts of Kindness Fund " may be used to cover an outstanding balance. If there are no resources in this account, the debt will be paid through the general fund.

PREVENTING UNPAID CHARGES

1. Free and reduced lunch applications are made available throughout the school year at each site that serves school lunches. Free and reduced lunch applications are also available at the district office. USD 353 staff will offer assistance in completing applications including providing translated applications. Households will be reminded throughout the year applications for free and reduced priced meals are available.
2. Once a middle school or high school student's account becomes negative, that student will no longer be able to charge al a carte (drinks not accompanying a meal or snacks). Parents may also request to put a limit on the amount of student al a cartepurchases.
3. USD 353 attempts to make lunch accounts payments convenient. Households may make payments to lunch accounts by cash, check, or card at any location that serves meals. Credit/debit cards may also be taken over the phone at all locations.
4. Students who have a negative meal account balance may bring cash for their lunch the day of service and will be served at each site regardless of a negative balance. No child that receives free meals will be denied a meal regardless of their account status, those students will be restricted to program meals only.
5. The following schedule will be used to place a hold on student accounts:
Elementary: \$25
Middle School: \$15
High School: \$5
Students are notified prior to the enforcement date that they will not be able to receive a lunch the next day and that they need to contact parents.
6. A "Random Acts of Kindness" account will be set up. Accounts will be settled that are to be transferred to bad debt first. If funds are available, schools may seek the assistance of the "Random Acts of Kindness" account.
7. Negative adult accounts are not permissible.

TRAINING

1. All staff directly responsible for enforcing the unpaid meal policy will be trained on the policy yearly.

POLICY REVISIONS

1. Policy changes will be made and reviewed with the wellness committee. All changes will be approved by the school board.