

I. Purpose/Policy:

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the district. This policy will assist in maintaining the financial integrity of the food service program. The goals of implementing this policy are:

- To establish a consistent district policy regarding charges and collection of charges
- To treat each child with dignity regarding charges and provide them with adequate nutrition
- To encourage school staff and administrators to be supportive of enforcing this policy
- To take into respect the age of the children when establishing the policy
- To encourage parent/guardian and students to be responsible for meal payments

II. Charge Policy

The North Pike School District will enforce the following charge policies:

- Free students will not be allowed to have a negative account balance. They will receive free meals that meets USDA guidelines daily but must have funds to pay for any A la carte items.
- Reduced students receive a meal at reduced price (.40) for lunch and (.30) for breakfast that meet USDA guidelines daily. They will reach their "account cap" once they have charged a total of -\$10.00. They must have extra funds to purchase any A La carte items.
- Full pay students (standard lunch rate) will reach their "account cap" once they have charged a total of -\$10.00. They must have extra funds to purchase any A La carte items.

III. Communication

The North Pike School District will use various ways of communication to stay in contact with parents.

- Parents will be made aware of the 'Charge Policy' by letters as they register, student handbooks, school websites and phone contact.
- Parents will be notified when their child reaches a low balance of -\$1.00 or more by a text, call or email issued by the Child Nutrition Department or other designee. A reminder letter will also be sent home giving parents ample time to make a deposit into their child's account.
- Middle School and High School students may be reminded by the cashier of low balances.
- All parents will be given the opportunity to apply for free or reduced meals during registration.
- Parents who register during the school year will be sent to the Child Nutrition Office for copies of the F/R lunch form, charge policy letter and instructions on how to keep meal accounts current.

IV. Payment Resources and Substitute Meals

- **If payment is not made and a student reaches "the cap" (-\$10.00) they will receive a substitute meal consisting of three meal components (one being a fruit or vegetable) that are on the menu for that day. This meal will meet requirements for a reimbursable meal so parents will be responsible for paying the Child Nutrition Department for this meal. Students will not be able to choose what they are served on a substitute meal plate.**
- Parents will be encouraged to use the online payment system
- Parents will be encouraged to use the automatic payment feature and low balance reminder feature offered through the online payment system.
- Students may bring meal money to the cafeteria at his/her designated school as they go through the lunch line.
- The Child Nutrition Office will be available to assist parents who are having trouble paying for meals
- If a parent does not follow through with payment of balances owed after receiving 3 substitute meals the school principal will be notified and will determine what further action will be taken.