

## **PAYMENT OF SCHOOL MEAL ACCOUNTS**

### **School Meal Charges and Accounts**

To ensure the effective operation of the district's food service program and delivery of school food program meals to students, the district shall:

1. Assign individual school meal accounts to each student for the purchase of meals served in school cafeterias, which ensure that the identity of each student is protected.
2. Notify parents/guardians when the student's school meal account reaches a low balance.
3. Notify parents/guardians when the student's school meal account reaches a negative balance. The notice shall include information on payment options.
4. Provide a school food program meal to each student who does not have the money to pay for the school food program meal or who has a negative balance in his/her school meal account, unless the student's parent/guardian has specifically provided written notice to the district to withhold a school food program meal.

When a student owes money for five (5) or more school food program meals, the district shall make at least two (2) attempts to contact the student's parent/guardian and shall provide the application for free/reduced-price school meal benefits to the parent/guardian to apply for benefits under federal school meal programs. The district may offer assistance to parents/guardians with applying for free/reduced-price school meal benefits.

Communications regarding money owed by a student for school meals shall be made to the student's parent/guardian, not the student, unless the student is an emancipated minor.

The district shall be permitted to contact the student's parent/guardian by means of a letter addressed to the parent/guardian that is delivered by the student.

School personnel may share balance information with students in grades 9-12 provided it is communicated in a discrete manner.

### **Collection of Unpaid Meal Charges**

Every two weeks, Crawford Central School District sends Negative Balance Reminder Letters to all parent/guardian who owe ~~money~~ more than \$5.00 on their student lunch accounts. Letters shall be sent via mail or email. The letter shall provide households with the amount they owe and (3) payment options listed below:

1. Send money with student to school the following day
2. Mail check made payable to CCSD Food Service to Crawford Central School District, Attention Business Office, 11280 Mercer Pike, Meadville, PA 16335
3. Make payments online via SchoolCafe. <https://www.schoolcafe.com/>

### **Collection of Increasing Negative Balances:**

In an effort to control costs within the School District and ensure continuation of a successful offering of nutritious meals for all students within Crawford Central, progressive action will be taken to collect negative student balances from parents and guardians of students. Procedures for collecting past due accounts shall include, but are not limited to, appropriate legal action and other means authorized by law. Said administrative procedures shall be adhered to cooperatively by the District and the Food Service Management Company.

Actions may include one or all of the items as listed below as determined by School District personnel.

\$20.00 and above

1. Negative Balance Reminder Letter
2. Free or reduced lunch application
3. Restriction of a la carte sales

\$50.00 and above

1. Negative Balance Reminder Letter
2. Free or reduced lunch application
3. Restriction of a la carte sales
4. Notify and engage support systems within student's school(s) to determine whether the negative balance is an indicator of financial or other distress— including but not limited to phone call, parent conference, and/or offering access to outside student assistance programs

\$100.00 and above

1. Negative Balance Reminder Letter
2. Free or reduced lunch application
3. Restriction of a la carte sales
4. Notify and engage support systems within student's school(s) to determine whether the negative balance is an indicator of financial or other distress— including but not limited to phone call, parent conference, and/or offering access to outside student assistance programs
5. Escalation on a case-by-case basis including but not limited to parent – school conference to create a resolution plan, assistance from outside child advocacy agencies and/or address the matter to the District Magistrate.

Students with negative balances will be restricted in the same manner as students with fees and fines due in other areas as outlined in the Student Handbook.

The District reserves the right to request and accept private donations from charitable and private sources and apply the donations to negative balance accounts as deemed appropriate by the Superintendent or designee.

### **Collection of Unpaid Balances at Year End**

At the end of the school year, letters of final balances of any amount will be sent home to households. Households will be given information for payment and for requesting assistance in paying negative balances. Households will be given thirty days to pay the balance, question the

balance or set up payment plans. Unanswered negative balances left after thirty days past the end of the school year shall be reclassified as bad debt and written off as operating loss. The totals will be sent to the Business office for collection, including but not limited to outside collection agencies. These balances will be adjusted out of the student's food service account at this time. Payments and other correspondence must be then sent to the District's General Fund.

### **Positive Student Account Balances**

At the end of each school year, any positive balance remaining on accounts for students who are qualified for reduced lunches shall be refunded to the parent or guardian according to state and federal regulations.

Upon graduation or transfer from the district, the district shall send a letter notifying the household of the positive balance. The parent or guardian may elect to

1. Transfer the balance to an active student account,
2. Request a full refund of the student's account balance, or
3. Donate the balance to pay negative balances on student accounts.

Parents shall be notified in the letter that funds remaining after 30 days from the date of the letter will automatically be donated to pay balances for needy families as determined by the School Food Service Director.