

MEAL CHARGES POLICY

In accordance with state and federal law, Pella Christian Schools 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.

Lunch is served each school day unless classes are dismissed at noon or earlier. Parents are welcome to eat with students. Advance notice is appreciated by contacting the school office before 9:00 a.m. Exact change for visitor lunches is welcomed.

The PC Family Portal system is utilized to maintain student accounts. An account is set up for each student and a scannable lunch card will be issued. This is a permanent card and should last the entire school year. Broken, abused or lost cards will be reissued for a \$5.00 fee.

Family accounts will link students in the same family to a common account for depositing money and for deducting money for meal transactions.

Payment of Meals

All students have a meal account. The account includes a scannable lunch card which should last the entire school year. When the balance reaches \$10.00 or below, a daily automated email from the PC Family Portal will be sent to parents indicating a low lunch balance. A daily email is sent electronically until the balance is above \$10.00. When an account reaches a negative balance of **-\$25.00**, a student shall not be allowed to charge further meals until the negative account balance is paid in full. In these instances, students will be required to either provide cash for their meal purchase or bring a lunch from home.

Parents or students may drop off payments directly at the school office or make payments online through the PC Family Portal. Each family retains the ability to monitor their child(ren)'s lunch account balance at any time through their PC Family Portal.

Students who qualify for free meals shall never be denied a reimbursable meal, regardless of any accrued negative balance from previous purchases. Students with outstanding meal charge debt shall still be permitted to purchase a meal if they pay for that specific meal at the time it is received.

Employees will also utilize a meal account and are expected to maintain a positive balance or pay for all meals in a timely manner.

Negative Account Balances

The school district will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt, coordinating communications directly with families to resolve outstanding balances. Families will receive a notification via email from the Business Office once their negative balance reaches **-\$25.00**.

To prevent accounts from remaining delinquent indefinitely, any negative balance exceeding **-\$40.00** not paid prior to the end of the school semester, will be turned over to the Finance

Committee. The Finance Committee will then work with the respective families to establish a collection plan.

Quick Reference: Account Balance Thresholds

Account Balance	Action / Status	Responsibility
\$10.00 or below	Daily low-balance alert issued.	Automated via PC Family Portal
-\$25.00	Meal charging privileges suspended. Direct negative balance alert issued. Alternative arrangements required (cash or home lunch).	Family / Cafeteria Staff & Business Office
-\$40.00+ or Delinquent	Account escalated for formal collection plan if unpaid at semester end.	Finance Committee

Communication of the Policy

The policy and supporting information regarding meal charges shall be provided in writing to:

- All families at or before the start of each school year, and during the school year as new families transfer into the district.
- Published clearly within the student handbook.
- All staff members responsible for enforcing or overseeing any aspect of this policy.
- Policy will be available on the school website, under Food Service

Detailed records outlining how and when the policy and supporting information were communicated to households and staff will be strictly retained by the institution. The Business Office may develop supplementary administrative processes to efficiently 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

Approved_Reviewed Revised