

USD 348 School Meal Account Management Guidelines

The goal of USD 348 Food Services is to provide students with healthy meals each day. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with federal reporting requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program, and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances, as unpaid charges place a financial burden on the Food Services Department and the patrons and taxpayers of USD 348. This policy is intended to establish uniform meal account procedures to ensure that all students have access to meals.

(We recognize that students who are hungry do not perform as well in the classroom)

Meal Accounts

- Upon enrollment, each student is given a student ID number that serves as their lunch account number.
- A point-of-sale computerized system tracks all meal and a la cart purchases.
- Adults are welcome to join students for meals at any time although notice is appreciated. Children not enrolled in Baldwin USD 348 are charged the adult guest price. Payment can be made in cash, check, or with a deduction from the student's account and must be made prior to being served.

Account Payments

- The Food Services department accepts cash and checks at the student's building. Payments may be brought or sent to the school office.
- Credit card payments may also be made online at <https://linqconnect.com/>. There is a transaction fee for paying online.
- Students can request their account balance at the register at any time. Parents and guardians may also check their student's balance through the Linq Family Portal and may elect for email reminders when balances fall below the amount they specify. Parents and guardians are reminded to keep their email address up to date.
- All payments received will be applied to past due balances first.

Account Balances

- Positive and negative balances are automatically carried over and applied to subsequent school years.
- Students with \$0.00 or negative balances will not be allowed to purchase any a la carte items, including extra milk or milk for a sack lunch from home, until money is deposited into their account or cash is given.
- All adult employees of USD 348 are required to maintain a positive balance. No charges for meals or a la carte are allowed.
- A student who qualifies for free lunches will not be denied a reimbursable meal. Students who are on reduced and paid meal status will not be denied a reimbursable meal, and they will continue being added to your negative account balance.
- Students at the HS, JH, and IC are verbally notified when the balance reaches \$10.00 and again when it drops below zero.
- Parents will be notified via email when student accounts reach a low balance of \$10.00. Parents are also notified via email when student accounts reach a negative amount. Parents will be notified via letter when students accounts drop below -\$25.00. Parents will also receive a phone call from the Food Service Director.
If a student account reaches -\$50.00 a certified/ return receipt letter will be mailed to the parent or guardian stating that they have 5 business days to pay in full or to set up payment schedule. If the account is not paid in full or a payment schedule arranged within 10 business days, the district will turn the account over to a collection agency, per district policy DP Collections Procedures.
- The Food Service Director or Kitchen Manager will notify parents/ students at least once a week until payment is received and account balance returns to a positive.

- If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, administration will investigate the situation more closely and take further action as needed. If financial hardship exists, parents and families are encouraged to apply for free or reduced-price lunches for their child(ren).
- If a family's financial situation changes at any time throughout the school year, the federal nutrition application for free and reduced meals may be submitted.

Account Refunds

- Refunds may be requested by calling the Food Service Director.
- Students who qualify for reduced-price meals at the time of withdrawal may request any amount of funds for refund.
- Students who withdraw from USD 348 may be granted a refund of remaining lunch account funds if the total requested exceeds \$5.00.
- Graduating seniors will be required to bring the account to zero prior to graduation. Remaining funds will be used to pay off other delinquent fees and transferred into a siblings account, given to the school donated funds account or they may be granted a refund of any amount over \$5.00.
- All funds remaining in a student's account must be requested within one school year of withdrawal or graduation. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the USD 348 Food Services Program.

Insufficient Funds and Debt

- Students leaving the district during the school year will be required to bring account to zero prior to transferring to a new school district.
- Account balances will be reduced by the amount of any check returned by the bank, due to insufficient funds or closed account, and may be charged a \$15.00 fee.
- The parent or guardian will receive notification via phone or email from the school office.
- Payment must be deposited in the student's account for the insufficient funds within 5 business days.
- Unpaid meal charges held at the end of the school year will be carried over to the next school year and must be paid in full at the time of enrollment. USD 348 Food Services will work diligently with families to ensure that debt is repaid in a timely manner.
- Unpaid meal charges are considered "delinquent debt" when payment is overdue. This debt is classified as delinquent if it is considered collectable and efforts are being made to collect it.
- If a student withdraws from or graduates from USD 348 and holds a negative meal account balance, the debt incurred is then classified as "bad debt" as the balance becomes "debts which have been determined to be uncollectible." (2 CFR 200.426) This debt may be turned over to a collection agency and the amount reimbursed to the foodservice fund from the USD 348 general fund.

For further information or if there are questions, please feel free to contact the food service director at: Charlee Juett
 PO Box 67
 Baldwin City, KS 66006
 785-594-2721 x 120
 cjuett@usd348.com

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