

Fortuna Union High School District

MEAL CHARGE POLICY

I. PURPOSE/POLICY:

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the Fortuna High School District. Pursuant to State and Federal Regulations all Child Nutrition Programs on the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program must have a written unpaid meal charge policy. The goals of this policy are:

- To ensure that all students have a healthy meal and that no child goes hungry.
- To support positive and clear communication among staff, administrators, teachers, Students, and parent or guardian.
- To establish fair practices that can be used throughout the school district.
- To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments.
- To establish a consistent practice regarding charges and collection of charges.

II. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

The Food Service Department:

- Responsible for maintaining charge records and bad debt recordkeeping.
- Responsible for attempting to directly certify the student for free or reduced-price meals when their account has gone negative.
- Will provide the household with a paper or electronic application for free or reduced-price meals.
- Notifying the school district and the individual schools of outstanding balances.
- Notifying parents/guardians of outstanding balances by phone, e-mail, and mail.

The School Staff:

- Teachers, School Social Workers, School Nurses, Liaisons for homeless, migrant, and/or runaway students, and other staff will assist in identifying students of need.

The School District:

- Assist Child Nutrition with collection of outstanding balances and will assist in identifying students of need.

The Parent/Guardian:

- Maintain a positive balance in your child's lunch account.
- Contact the Food Service Department and the School to resolve any issues with your child's lunch account.
- Keep the Food Service Department up to date with current contact information.

III. POLICY and PROCEDURE:

UNRECOVERED OR DELINQUENT DEBT

Unrecovered or delinquent debt refers to meal charges that have not been paid by the student(s) or parent(s) during the fiscal year.

1. All students will not be allowed to have a balance less than -\$20.00 on their account at any given time.
2. Only Federally designated reimbursable meals can be charged to an account with funds amounts less than \$0.00.
3. Once the account goes below \$0.00 FUHSD Food Services will attempt to directly certify the student for free or reduced-price meals. If FUHSD Food Services cannot directly certify the student—or find their names on a homeless, migrant, runaway, foster, Head Start list from the liaison, or the foster list available on CALPADS—then FUHSD Food Services will provide the household with a paper or electronic free or reduced application along with notification of negative balances.

Example:

As of [DATE], your child has a negative balance of \$[X.XX]. We strongly encourage you to pay this amount as soon as possible. Your response to this request is important. Paying back a debt shows your personal responsibility. It also keeps our food service program strong which ensures all children at our school have access to the healthy food they need to focus in the classroom.

When the student(s) account has a negative balance the school district will be directed to place a telephone call and/or send written notification to the parent/guardian indicating:

- The availability of free/reduced meal applications
- The debt owed

1. Students that have already received a breakfast or lunch will not be allowed to charge another one during the same day unless they have at least \$3.00 in their account.
2. An a la Carte or snack item will not be allowed to be charged to an account with insufficient funds.

BAD DEBT

Bad debt is considered unrecovered or delinquent debt that, after all reasonable steps have been taken, has not been recovered by, or before, the end of the fiscal year in which the debt was incurred.

When the FUHSD Food Services has taken all reasonable steps to recover the unrecovered or delinquent debt, and is unsuccessful in collecting the debt by the end of the fiscal year, the balance will be considered Bad Debt and the school site responsible will be billed. Nonfederal funding sources (e.g., Parent–Teachers Association or district general fund) must be used to repay the bad debt.

- District’s general fund
- Special funding from State or Local governments
- Or any other non-Federal sources.

Bad Debt exceptions:

Date of debt: The debt is incurred less than 90 days prior to the end of the fiscal year. Under this exception, the district will have 90 days to collect the debt and receive payment for the unpaid meal charges. The 90 days will begin at the end of the claiming period for the debt incurred. At the end of the 90 days, the unpaid meal charges will be deemed as bad debt and a nonfederal funding source must repay the Food Services Department within 30 days.

For example, a student incurs unpaid meal charges in the month of May. Since the student debt for May is less than 90 days prior to the end of the fiscal year, the district will have 90 days to collect the debt for May. If the district is unsuccessful in collecting the unrecovered or delinquent debt at the end of the 90 days, then the debt becomes bad debt.

Repayment plan: FUHSD Food Services enters into a repayment plan with the family prior to the end of the fiscal year and this process continues into the next fiscal year. For example, a family notifies the district that they are willing to make monthly payments and agrees to set up a six-month payment plan in an effort to pay off the student’s unpaid meal charge balance. Under this exception, the district can establish a payment plan for the family that allows the unrecovered or delinquent debt to carry forward into the next fiscal year.

Note to Parents:

HOW TO APPLY FOR FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS:

If you think your child may be eligible for free or reduced price meals, please submit a school meal application. You may do this at any time during the school year. Applications are available at Fortuna High School, Academy of the Redwoods, and East High School offices between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday thru Friday. Applications are also available any time on our district website.

You must submit an application every year to be considered for free or reduced price meals. Even if your child received free or reduced price meals last year, you must submit a new application this year.

We are happy to help you complete the application. If you have any questions or need help, please contact:

FUHSD Food Services: Regina Salmon, 707-725-4461 Ext 3095

Translators are available on request

HOW TO MAKE A PAYMENT:

PAY BY MAIL:

FUHSD CAFETERIA
379 12th Street
Fortuna, CA 95540

PAY IN PERSON: (Parent or student)

- In the cafeteria at Fortuna High School between 7:00am - 2:00pm,
- In the main school office (checks only)