

## La Conner School District Meal Payment Management Policy

In order to allow students to receive nutritious meals, prevent over-identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals, and maintain the financial integrity of the nonprofit school nutrition program, the District will establish a written meal payment process for students eligible for reduced priced meals and students that are not eligible for free meals. The meal payment policy will be communicated to households each year so that school district employees, families and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal payments. ***The emphasis of this policy and procedure is that each student and adult account is considered a debit account and meals are intended to be deducted from a positive balance, unless a determination is made of eligibility for free meals.***

The District's Meal Payment Management Policy will also address unpaid meal balances. Students with outstanding meal debt will be allowed to purchase a meal, and encouraged to pay at the time for that meal. The district allows unrestricted access to the meal(s) of the day regardless of the student account balance. At the point of sale, the cashier notifies a student of an unpaid balance as discretely as possible, but the emphasis of all communication for the need of payment will be directed to the parent/guardian of that student. A la carte items (such as extra beverages) must be paid in cash by all customers, or from a balance on the account made in advance.

The District will make reasonable, discrete efforts to notify families when meal account balances are due through use of letters sent home, e-mail messages, and phone calls by principals, building secretaries and the accounts payable department. This practice (s) occurs every school business day. Families will be notified of an outstanding balance when there is a low balance or any negative amount. When a case of financial hardship for a student (s) is determined by administrators, unpaid balances may be paid with donated community funds.

Negative balances not paid prior to the end of the school year will be considered delinquent debt. The district will make reasonable, discrete efforts to collect delinquent (overdue) unpaid meal balances, and will coordinate communications with families to resolve the balances.

District employees may use an account for meals, but may *not* charge to their account. When an account reaches a zero balance, the employee will not be allowed a meal or a la carte items until the current meal is paid for or a positive balance is in the account.