

Regulation 3551: Food Service Operations/Cafeteria Fund

Status: ADOPTED

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Payments for Meals

With the exception of students who are eligible to receive meals at no cost, students or their parents/guardians may pay on a per-meal basis or may submit payments in advance. The Superintendent or designee shall maintain an account indicating payments received from each student or his/her parents/guardians for the purchase of school meals.

At the beginning of the school year, and whenever a student enrolls during the school year, parents/guardians shall be notified of the district's meal payment policies and be encouraged to prepay for meals whenever possible. The Superintendent or designee shall communicate the district's meal payment policies through multiple methods, including, but not limited to:

1. Explaining the meal charge policy within registration materials provided to parents/guardians at the start of the school year
2. Including the policy in print versions of student handbooks, if provided to parents/guardians annually
3. Providing the policy whenever parents/guardians are notified regarding the application process for free and reduced-price meals, such as in the distribution of applications at the start of the school year
4. Posting the policy on the district's web site
5. Establishing a system to notify parents/guardians when a student's meal payment account has a low or negative balance

In order to avoid potential misuse of a student's food service account by someone other than the student in whose name the account has been established, the Superintendent or designee shall verify a student's identity when setting up the account and when charging any meal to the account. The Superintendent or designee shall investigate any claim that a bill does not belong to a student or is inaccurate, and shall open a new account as appropriate for a student whose account appears to have been misused.

Payment of Accounts

The student and his/her parents/guardians shall be notified by phone, and/or by printed statements sent home with students, whenever the student's account has reached a negative balance.

Checks returned due to insufficient funds will be charged back to the student's meal account along with the current returned check charge fee. The parent will immediately be notified by mail. If the insufficient funds have not been taken care of within 30 days, the district Attorney's Office may be contacted for legal action.

When one check is returned due to insufficient funds, personal checks will no longer be accepted for payment. When this point of indebtedness is met, only cash, money orders, cashier checks, or on-line payments will be accepted for Food Services for the remainder of the year.

Unpaid and Delinquent Meal Charges

The district shall not direct any action toward a student to collect unpaid school meal fees. (Education Code 49557.5)

Students who have unpaid meal charges shall be served a meal of their choice throughout the school year regardless of the level of debt incurred by the household. Such students shall not be overtly identified by the use of special tokens, tickets, or other means and shall not be shamed, treated differently, or denied a meal of their choice. (Education Code 49557, 49557.5)

No later than 10 days after a student's school meal account has reached a negative balance, the Superintendent or designee shall so notify the student's parent/guardian. Before sending this notification, the district shall exhaust all options and methods to directly certify the student for free or reduced-price meals. If the district is not able to

directly certify the student, the notice to the parent/guardian shall include a paper copy of, or an electronic link to, an application for free or reduced-price meals and the Superintendent or designee shall contact the parent/guardian to encourage submission of the application. (Education Code 49557.5)

The district may attempt to collect unpaid school meal fees from a parent/guardian, but shall not use a debt collector. (Education Code 49557.5)

The Superintendent or designee may enter into an agreement with a student's parent/guardian for payment of the student's unpaid meal charge balance over a period of time. As necessary, the repayment plan may allow the unrecovered or delinquent debt to carry over into the next fiscal year.

The district's efforts to collect debt shall be consistent with district policies and procedures, California Department of Education (CDE) guidance, and 2 CFR 200.426. The district shall not spend more than the actual debt owed in efforts to recover unpaid meal charges.

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain records of the efforts made to collect unpaid meal charges and, if applicable, financial documentation showing when the unpaid meal balance has become an operating loss.

Balances on Account

Positive balances on account at the end of the year will be carried over to the next school year. Should the student be promoted from eighth grade, upon request, balances can be transferred to a sibling attending the Kingsburg Elementary Charter School District, or refunded to the parent.

Refunds on Account

Refunds on account will be made upon request. If a request is not made within 30 days, the balance will be written off, per Government Code 50050. A processing fee may be charged when refunding an account balance.

Donation of Leftover Food

To minimize waste and reduce food insecurity, the district may provide sharing tables where students and staff may return appropriate unused cafeteria food items to be made available to students during the course of a regular school meal time. If food on the sharing tables is not taken by a student, the school cafeteria may donate the food to a food bank or any other nonprofit charitable organization. (Health and Safety Code 114079)

Food that may be donated includes prepackaged, nonpotentially hazardous food with the packaging still intact and in good condition, whole uncut produce that complies with Health and Safety Code 113992, unopened bags of sliced fruit, unopened containers of milk that are immediately stored in a cooling bin maintained at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below, and perishable prepackaged food if it is placed in a proper temperature-controlled environment. The preparation, safety, and donation of food shall be consistent with Health and Safety Code 113980. (Health and Safety Code 114079)

Cafeteria Fund

All proceeds from food sales and other services offered by the cafeteria shall be deposited in the cafeteria fund as provided by law. (Education Code 38090, 38093)

The cafeteria fund shall be used only for those expenditures authorized by the Board as necessary for the operation of school cafeterias in accordance with Education Code 38100-38103, 2 CFR Part 200 Appendix VII, and the California School Accounting Manual.

With CDE approval, the district may use cafeteria funds to supplement the provision of universal breakfast. On or before July 1 of each year, the district shall submit to CDE a Board-signed application certifying that breakfast will be provided to all students at no charge and that any cost above the amount provided in federal reimbursement will be covered by the district with nonfederal funds. (Education Code 49550.5)

Any charges to, or transfers from, a food service program shall be dated and accompanied by a written explanation of the purpose of and basis for the expenditure. (Education Code 38101)

Indirect costs charged to the food service program shall be based on either the district's prior year indirect cost rate

as approved by CDE or the statewide average approved indirect cost rate for the second prior fiscal year, whichever is less. (Education Code 38101)

Net cash resources in the nonprofit school food service shall not exceed three months average expenditures. (7 CFR 210.14, 220.7)

U.S. Department of Agriculture Foods

The district shall provide facilities for the storage and control of foods received through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that protect against theft, spoilage, damage, or other loss. Such storage facilities shall maintain donated foods in sanitary conditions, at the proper temperature and humidity, and with adequate air circulation. The district shall comply with all federal, state, or local requirements related to food safety and health and procedures for responding to a food recall, as applicable, and shall obtain all required health inspections. (7 CFR 250.14)

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain inventories of USDA foods in accordance with 7 CFR 250.59 and CDE procedures, and shall ensure that foods are used before their expiration dates.

USDA donated foods shall be used in school lunches as far as practicable. USDA foods also may be used in other nonprofit food service activities, including, but not limited to, school breakfasts or other meals, a la carte foods sold to students, meals served to adults directly involved in the operation and administration of the food service and to other school staff, and training in nutrition, health, food service, or general home economics instruction for students, provided that any revenues from such activities accrue to the district's nonprofit food service account. (7 CFR 250.59)

Contracts with Outside Services

The term of any contract for management consulting services related to food services management shall not exceed one year. Any renewal of the contract or further requests for proposals to provide such services shall be considered on a year-to-year basis.

Any contract for management of the food service operation shall be approved by CDE and comply with the conditions in Education Code 49554 and 7 CFR 210.16 as applicable. The district shall retain control of the quality, extent, and general nature of its food services, including prices to be charged to students for meals, and shall monitor the food service operation through periodic on-site visits. The district shall not enter into a contract with a food service company to provide a la carte food services, unless the company agrees to offer free, reduced-price, and full-price reimbursable meals to all eligible students. (Education Code 49554; 42 USC 1758; 7 CFR 210.16)

A contract for food service management consulting services shall not result in the supervision of food service classified staff by the management consultant, nor shall it result in the elimination of any food service classified staff or position or have any adverse effect on the wages, benefits or other terms and conditions of employment of classified food service staff or positions. Health criteria established by the district for classified staff shall be applicable to all persons providing food service management consulting services. (Education Code 45103.5)
