

## School Nutrition Program Meal Charge Policy

### I. Purpose

The goal of KIPP SoCal Public Schools is to provide students with healthy meals each day regardless of their ability to pay for their meals. However, unpaid meal account balances place a large financial burden on our schools. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with Federal requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program and to provide accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances.

The intent of this policy is to establish uniform meal charge and meal balance collection procedures throughout KIPP SoCal Public Schools. The provisions of this policy pertain to full price breakfast and lunch meals only. While the USDA Child Nutrition Program does not require that a student who pays for full priced meals to be served a meal without payment, KIPP SoCal Public Schools provides this policy as a courtesy to those students in the event that they do not have funds in their meal account.

### II. Scope of Responsibility

- A. Regional Operations Team:** Responsible for overseeing the regional policies and procedures of meal account balance collections.
- B. Schools:** Responsible for notifying parents/guardians of meal account balances with written documentation, phone calls and/or meetings with parents of students with unpaid meal charges, setting school-based meal charge policies, and for making a reasonable effort to collect meal account balances.
- C. Parents/Guardians:** Responsible for immediate payment of student meal account balance invoices.

### III. Policy

#### A. Administration

- a. Students under the full and reduced-price meal eligibility categories will be allowed unlimited charges to their meal account. No student will be denied a meal based on the current balance of their meal account. However, it is expected that all students have a zero balance by the last day of the school year.

#### B. Acceptable Forms of Payment

- a. Parents/guardians are able to pay with cash or check in the school office or by credit/debit card online at [www.mymealtime.com](http://www.mymealtime.com). Payment for meals is not allowed in the meal service line.
- b. Parents/guardians are encouraged to set up an online payment account at [www.mymealtime.com](http://www.mymealtime.com). The MealTime Pay Online system allows parents/guardians to track their student's meal charges and make online credit/debit card payments towards the meal account. Parents/guardians have the option to receive email notifications when their child's account balance is low.
- c. To avoid unpaid meal charges, parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to maintain a credit in the student's meal account.

## C. Parent Notification

- a. Parents/guardians will be notified of unpaid meal charges via a meal account balance notification invoice sent home with the student or mailed to the student's household every 10 business days. Prompt payment is required in order to avoid actions being taken to collect unpaid meal charges.
- b. If payment is not received within two weeks of the notice, the school will call the parents/guardians to request payment within one week. Requests for payment will continue until an attempt at payment is made.

## D. Unpaid Meal Account Balances

- a. If a parent/guardian makes no attempt at paying a student's meal account balance after repeated attempts of collection by the school or if the student's meal account consistently maintains a deficit over \$50, the school's School Business Operations Manager may take one or more of the following actions:
  - i. Prohibit participation of the parent/guardian of the student in school programs, field trips, and/or school events where the school pays a fee,
  - ii. Prohibit parent/guardian participation in end-of-year activities or culminating ceremonies,
  - iii. Other actions at the school's discretion
- b. Per State regulation, unpaid meal account balances accrued during the school year that are not paid by the last day of June after repeated attempts of collection must be reimbursed by the school's general fund to the Cafeteria Fund.
  - i. Exceptions to this regulation are as follows:
    1. Debt incurred less than 90 days prior to the end of the fiscal year will not become bad debt until 90 days past the claiming period for the debt incurred.
    2. Families engaged in a repayment plan that extends into the next fiscal year will have their debt carry forward into the next fiscal year.

## E. Refunds

- a. Refunds for withdrawn and graduating students
  - i. A written request for a refund of any money remaining in the student's account must be submitted within three years of the student exit from the school and sent to: KIPP SoCal Public Schools, ATTN: Regional Operations Team, 3601 E. First St., Los Angeles, CA 90063 or emailed to [klasops@kippsocal.org](mailto:klasops@kippsocal.org).
    1. Written requests for refunds must include the student's name, school, the date the student exited the school, and the reason the refund is requested.
- b. Students who are graduating at the end of the year will be given the option to transfer remaining account credits to a sibling's account with a written request sent to: KIPP SoCal Public Schools, ATTN: Regional Operations Team, 3601 E. First St., Los Angeles, CA 90063 or emailed to [klasops@kippsocal.org](mailto:klasops@kippsocal.org).
  - i. Written requests for the transfer of credited funds must include the graduated student's name and school, and the name and school of the sibling that will receive the transferred funds.

- c. Students receiving reduced-price meals will receive a credit for any funds remaining in their account upon graduation or transfer out of KIPP SoCal Public Schools. If they do not wish to receive a refund they can choose to donate the funds to the school to cover the unpaid charges of other students.
  - i. The school office staff are responsible for checking the student's account upon exit from the school and communicating the refund amount and options to the family.
  - ii. Written requests for the donation of credited funds must include the graduated/transferred student's name and school, and a statement indicating their wish for the funds to be donated for use of paying unpaid meal charges at the school's discretion.

**F. Unclaimed Funds**

After three years, unclaimed funds will become the property of KIPP SoCal Public Schools.