

Roxana CUSD #1 Unpaid Meal Procedure

Roxana CUSD #1 recognizes the important link between proper nutrition and academic success. The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent district procedure for charging meals when students do not have money to pay, preventing meal charges, and ensuring eligible children are certified for free and reduced-price school meals.

Scope of responsibility:

Food Service Department:

1. Maintain meal account records
2. Provide written documentation of student's lunch account activity when requested
3. Notify the school district and the school of outstanding balances
4. Notify students/parents/guardians of outstanding balances by phone, email and /or mail

School District

1. Assist the Food Service Department with collection of outstanding balances by sending home balance sheets generated by the Food Service Department

Parent /Guardian

1. Maintain a positive balance in your child's meal account
2. Monitor their child's lunch account balance
3. Apply for the Free and Reduced Meal Benefits when applicable
4. Contact the Food Service Department and the school to resolve any issues with their child's lunch account

Charging meals:

Roxana CUSD #1 strongly discourages meal charges, but understands that an occasional emergency, shortage of funds, or forgetfulness may make it necessary. Because hunger is an impediment to learning, no child shall be denied a school meal because of an inability to pay. Children will be served a meal that meets the U.S. Department of Agriculture nutrition standards for school meals. If a student's food service account balance is greater than -\$25.00, a Food Service Department representative will contact the parent/guardian for the balance. Families will be offered to apply for free and reduced priced meals.

Hand stamps, stickers, or any other means of overt identification of children with unpaid meal debt in the cafeteria or the classroom are prohibited. Additionally, children with unpaid meal debt shall not be required to work off their debt, including, but not limited to, wiping down tables or cleaning the cafeteria.

Snacks and extras

- Students must have money in their account to buy snacks and extras.

Preventing meal charges:

To ensure that all eligible families are certified for free and reduced-price school meals, the school nutrition department shall:

- Provide all households with school meal applications prior to the start of the school year and/or include instructions for completing online school meal applications;
- Provide access to school meal applications online at www.roxanaschools.org

- Provide school meal applications in the primary language of the parent or guardian and provide assistance with completing an application for any household that requests assistance;
- Promptly utilize data provided by the state or other school district officials to certify eligible children without an application; and
- Assure that any child for whom the school district is not able to obtain a completed school meal application, but becomes aware of their eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals shall be certified based on an application submitted by the appropriate school official, as permitted by USDA guidance.

To ensure that households are aware of negative account balances and the potential to accrue meal debt, the school nutrition department will:

- Send out low balance notices approximately every 12-14 days;
- Notify and/or work with principals, school counselors, and/or teachers to understand the student and parent's situation and if a school meal application is needed; and
- Use email alerts to notify parents of negative balances. (Parent must sign up for email alerts)

Collecting unpaid meal debt:

All communication regarding unpaid meal debt shall be directed at parents or guardians. Schools may send children home with a letter in an unmarked envelope. All meal charges must be paid off at the end of the school year and any unpaid charges will be carried forward to the next school year. Money remaining in a student's account will be carried forward to the next school year.

Prior to contacting households regarding unpaid meal debt, the school district shall ensure that the student is not participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or other federal programs, which would confer categorical eligibility for free school meals, or is not homeless, migrant, or in foster care, and would allow them to be certified without an application.

For households that cannot afford to pay their school meal charges, the school district will work with them to establish a payment plan. Households that are subsequently certified for free or reduced-price school meals at a point later in the school year shall not immediately be required to repay school meal debt accrued in that school year.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.