

Child Nutrition Charging Procedures

Elysian Fields Independent School District MEAL CHARGE AND COLLECTION PROCEDURE

TEXAS-HB3562—CHARGE POLICY

When a school district allows students to use prepaid accounts to purchase school meals, the district must establish a grace period during which a student is able to charge meals after the prepaid funds are exhausted. The school district must also notify the student's parent or guardian that the student's account balance is exhausted. The district is not allowed to charge a fee or interest in connection with meals purchased by the students during the grace period. When the school district notifies the student's parent or guardian that the student has a negative balance, the district may set a repayment schedule for the meal charges.

Policy Communication:

Ensure this policy is provided in writing to all households at the start of each school year and to households that transfer to the school during the school year. It also must be provided to all school staff that may assist students in need. Policy will also be included in student handbooks and on the EFISD School Nutrition website.

GOALS:

- ◆ To treat all students with dignity about their meal account in the serving line.
- ◆ To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student.
- ◆ To support positive situations with district staff, district business policies, student and parent/guardian to the maximum extent possible.
- ◆ To establish a consistent district policy regarding meal charges and collection

DISTRICT-WIDE POLICY

The District encourages all parents and guardians to provide a healthy breakfast and lunch for their student(s). Parents are welcome to send students to school with a "brown bag/lunch box" meal. The District provides the opportunity to purchase a meal from the school cafeteria.

STUDENT:

For all students there will be a charge limit (up to \$25.00). Once the maximum amount of \$25.00 has been met, the student will be offered a **low cost reimbursable meal**. The low cost breakfast will consist of two grains, up to two fruits or one fruit and/or juice, and a choice of milk for all campuses. The low cost lunch will consist of a meat/meat alternate, whole grain, a choice of fruit, up to two vegetables, and a choice of milk at Elementary campus. The low cost lunch at High/Middle School will consist of a meat/meat alternate, whole grain, up to two fruits and/ or vegetables, and a choice of milk. We are offering a low cost reimbursable meal because we feel it is important that students not be denied access to a meal during the school day.

Every attempt will be made by the School Nutrition Department to avoid offering a low cost meal. Verbal reminders will be given discretely reminding student to bring lunch money. Charge notices will be sent by email, mail, or via take home folders to all parents in an attempt to collect and keep parents informed. The parent/guardian will receive a phone call to inform them that the student will be receiving a low cost meal until the charges are paid.

Pricing for the 2023-2024 school year:

Elementary Breakfast: \$1.85

Middle/High School Breakfast: \$1.85

Elementary Lunch: \$2.60

Middle/High School Lunch: \$2.85

PAYMENT METHOD

There are 3 methods of payment available to parents/guardians to keep accounts current; ***cash, check, or payment on line.*** Cash or check payments can be given to the students' school office, the cafeteria or administration building. You can also send money by your child, in sealed envelope, with clear instructions for the money.

If paying on line, visit the **EFISD website**,
Under District,
Select: Departments-
Select: Food Service-
Select: My School Bucks: follow instructions to create an account.
You will need your Childs School ID.

This site allows many conveniences such as payment online, low balance email notices, ability to view purchases, and other advantages parents/guardians may choose to use. There is a convenience fee.

A student whose parent/guardian is an employee of Elysian Fields ISD may charge his/her meals/snacks to the student's cafeteria account. The student's negative balance is checked each month and deducted from the payroll of the parent/guardian. The negative balance may reach more than the limit of -\$20, but will be allowed due to ability to deduct from payroll.

Free or Reduced Price Meals

The District participates in the federally supported program to provide free or reduced price meals to students from families whose economic circumstances make paying for meals difficult. Income guidelines for eligibility are based on income and family size and are updated each year by the TDA. The District will ensure parents are informed of the eligibility requirements and application procedures for free or reduced cost meals as well as the requirements of this policy.

The District will proactively enroll students found to be categorically eligible into the free or reduced price meal program. The District will seek to enroll eligible students in the free or reduced price meal program upon learning from any source of the student's potential eligibility.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES: If charges occur before the meal application is approved the charges must be paid as accrued by the parent or guardian. The collection of owed charges is aggressively pursued.

OTHER INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

The EFISD uses a computer system for student meal purchases. All students are assigned a personal Student ID # when enrolled. All students have their own account and money may be deposited into it on a daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis. ***We encourage monthly deposits to help speed up the serving lines at mealtime. We appreciate our parents who prepay for the meals. It helps the line move so much quicker, and also assures that your child will receive a meal without delay.*** Parents may get information about their students eating habits anytime by using my school bucks, our online source, or by contacting the school manager of your child's school:

**Stacie Fottenbury High/Middle School @ (903)633-1531 or
Franci Corr Elementary @ (903) 633-1565 or
by calling Leanne Blackmore, Child Nutrition Directors office at (903)633-1514.**

REMINDERS –

- The sooner your child learns their ID number, the easier it is to get lunch promptly. Parents can always check your child's account balance using the myschoolbucks.com or the My School Bucks App.
- Any person(s) that has had three returned checks to the District will no longer be able to pay by check. Cash or money orders only will be accepted. All returned checks will be charged back to the student's account and the parent/guardian may be responsible for any and all fees that may incur.
- We maintain a **no check cashing policy**. Any check given to credit a student's meal account will be applied in full to the meal account(s).
- Students are not allowed to charge "Extras" or snack purchases.
- Charges accrued before application approval must be paid by the Parent.
- **Credit Card payments** accepted **ONLY Online** for Student Meals – @myschoolbucks.com or on the My School Bucks APP.
- Parents are encouraged to set up a 'Low Balance Notice' through my school bucks.
- Nonprofit school nutrition resources may not be used to cover costs related to bad debt arising from uncollectable accounts. These funds must come from the school district's general fund or non-federal source.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation.

The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. Mail:

*U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or*

2. Fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

3. Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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