



## **BULTUM ACADEMY SCHOOL MEAL CHARGE POLICY**

**Adopted: 12/13/2023**

### **I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students receive healthy and nutritious meals through Bultum Academy's nutrition program and that Bultum Academy employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. Bultum Academy aims to provide meals to students in a respectful manner while maintaining the dignity of students by prohibiting lunch shaming or any other form of ostracization. This policy aims to ensure students receive the nutrition they need during the school day, minimize the identification of students with insufficient funds for meals, and maintain the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.

### **II. PAYMENT OF MEALS**

A. All meal and a la carte purchases are to be prepaid before meal service begins. Electronic payments with credit or debit cards can be deposited online using the academy contracted vendor or with cash or check in person at a school or the academy office.

B. If Bultum Academy receives school lunch aid, it must make lunch available without charge to all participating students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals, irrespective of account balance.

C. No student will be denied a meal while in the serving line. If a student's account does not have enough money for a breakfast and/or lunch meal, they will still receive a meal, resulting in a negative account balance. Every student will be given a meal, regardless of their account balance.

D. Once a meal has been given to a student, it cannot be taken back by the cashier or any other school official, even if the student has an outstanding meal balance. E. Students with a negative account balance will not be allowed to charge a la carte items. Sufficient funds for these items must be present at the point of sale.

### **III. LOW OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES – NOTIFICATION**

A. Bultum Academy will make reasonable efforts to notify parents/guardians when meal account balances are low or negative.



B. Parents/guardians will be informed of an outstanding negative balance via phone calls, text messages, and/or emails as per the process managed by Food & Nutrition Services.

C. Payment reminders must treat every student with dignity and must not demean or stigmatize any student. This includes, but is not limited to, throwing away meals, announcing names, or using stickers, stamps, or pins.

#### **IV. UNPAID MEAL CHARGES**

A. Bultum Academy will make reasonable efforts to communicate with families to resolve unpaid charges. Families may be encouraged to apply for free and reduced-price meals.

B. Bultum Academy will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt.

C. Bultum Academy may employ a collection agency for unpaid meal debts after attempting to collect the debt itself. Collection methods may include collection agencies, claims in the conciliation court, or any other legal method.

D. Bultum Academy will not use non-academy employees, such as volunteers, for debt collection.

E. Bultum Academy will not impose any restrictions due to unpaid student meal balances. Participation in school activities, field trips, clubs, or access to materials will not be limited due to unpaid balances.

*Disclaimer - "Bultum Academy is a CEP school, Therefore all students in the building eat for free. Additionally, Minnesota Senate passed a bill proving universal free meals for Minnesota students"*

#### **IV. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY**

A. This policy and supporting information will be provided in writing to: 1. All households at the start of each school year; 2. New students and families; 3. All Bultum Academy personnel responsible for enforcing this policy.

B. The policy will be posted on Bultum Academy's website.

C. If Bultum Academy contracts with a third party for meal services, the third-party provider will adhere to Bultum Academy's meal policy.



***Legal References:***

- ***Minn. Stat. § 123B.37 (Prohibited Fees)***
- ***Minn. Stat. § 124D.111 (Lunch Aid; Food Service Accounting)***
- ***42 U.S.C. § 1751 et seq. (Healthy and Hunger-Free Kids Act)***
- ***7 C.F.R. § 210 et seq. (School Lunch Program Regulations)***
- ***7 C.F.R. § 220.8 (School Breakfast Program Regulations)***
- ***USDA Policy Memorandum SP 46-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies (2016)***
- ***USDA Policy Memorandum SP 47-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments (2016)***
- ***USDA Policy Memorandum SP 23-2017, Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q&A***