

**NOVA CLASSICAL ACADEMY**  
**MANUAL OF POLICIES APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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**POLICY 534:**  
**UNPAID MEAL CHARGE AND COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent district practices for the provision of meals to students who have insufficient funds in their school food service accounts and the collection of unpaid debt.

**II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY**

1. Nova Classical Academy provides nutritious meals to students to promote healthy eating habits and enhance learning as well as maintain the financial integrity of the National School Breakfast and Lunch programs while eliminating the stigma associated with the inability to pay.
2. It is the policy of Nova Classical to offer breakfast and lunch meals that meet state and federal guidelines.
3. All students are offered one breakfast meal and one lunch meal free of charge each school day. The current price for à la carte milk is posted on Nova Classical's website.
4. Families may apply for free/reduced-price educational benefits anytime during the school year. The Application for Educational Benefits is distributed to all families in the district prior to the student's first day of classes. In addition, the Application for Educational Benefits is available online in the Infinite Campus parent portal. If household income or size change, families can apply for meal benefits anytime during the school year.
5. Nova Classical maintains the dignity of students by prohibiting lunch shaming or indicating in any way, a student's lack of funds or benefit eligibility status.

**III. CHARGE POLICY**

1. If the student account has insufficient funds to pay for milk, the student will be given milk and the parent will be contacted in writing to put funds into the food service account.
2. Meals or milk will not be withdrawn from a student for lack of funds.
3. Students eligible for free or reduced-price meals will always be served a meal regardless of unpaid foodservice accounts.

4. When a student eligible for PAID meals has “cash in hand” to pay for a meal, the student will be served a meal regardless of unpaid foodservice accounts. The “cash in hand” will not be applied towards past due balances.
5. Alternate meals may not be provided to students as a result of school lunch debt. Providing an alternate meal not on the scheduled menu violates Minnesota Statute section 124D.111 which requires respectful treatment of students regarding school lunch debt.

#### **IV. NOTIFICATION OF ACCOUNT STATUS**

1. Any reminders for payment of outstanding student meal balances will not demean or stigmatize any child participating in the school lunch program, including but not limited to dumping meals, withdrawing a meal that has been served, providing an alternate meal, announcing or listing students' names publicly, or affixing stickers, stamps, or pins.
2. Household are informed of food service account negative balances in writing.

#### **V. COLLECTION OF UNPAID DEBT**

When the student meal balance is below \$5.00, the following collection action will be taken:

Nova Classical Academy food service does not contract with a debt collection service. The Food Service Director will contact the household in writing to request payment.

#### **VI. POLICY COMMUNICATION**

This policy and any pertinent supporting information shall be provided in writing to:

1. All households at or before the start of each school year,
2. Students and families who transfer into the school district upon enrollment, and
3. All Nova Classical personnel and third-party meal service providers responsible for enforcing this policy.

Nova Classical must also post the policy on the school’s website in addition to providing the required written notification described above.

***ADOPTED BY THE BOARD: 02/26/2024***

***REVISED BY THE BOARD:***

***EFFECTIVE DATE: 02/26/2024***