**Procedures for Student Lunch/Meal Accounts**

**[NOTE**: The following paragraphs explain the purpose for these procedures. They should not be adopted as part of the procedures for student lunch/meal accounts.]

*School corporations must adopt a procedure regarding student lunch accounts. Every effort must be made to collect delinquent debt. If the uncollectable debt is a student lunch account, it cannot be an expense to the school food service account and must be covered by non-Federal funds. A school corporation can decide if they want to develop separate procedures for primary-aged children versus secondary-aged children.*

*Keep in mind the following prohibitions when developing a student lunch/meal account procedure. Schools are not allowed to deny meals to any child for disciplinary reasons. Schools cannot deny a meal to a reduced or paid child, if the child has money in hand for the day’s meal, and schools cannot deny a meal to a student eligible for free meals even if money is owed. Whatever procedure the school or food service establishes, the school must assure that the procedure does not discriminate against or single out any group of students.*

*In addition, the Indiana State Board of Accounts requires student accounts to be accounted separately from the School Lunch Fund (800). Student’s accounts should be in the Trust Fund (8400), until the student actually receives a meal. The money can then be transferred into the School Lunch Fund. The Trust Fund (8400) should be reconciled to the detail of student account balances.*

*Following is a sample procedure that complies with the USDA regulations requirements.*

**Procedure for Student Lunch/Meal Accounts**

*(Add to or delete any of the following to make it applicable to your school corporation)*

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) requires school food authorities to establish written administrative guidelines and procedures for meal charges. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ School Corporation will adhere to the following meal charge procedure.

* All cafeteria purchases are to be prepaid before meal service begins [*describe how households can prepay student accounts. If electronic payment options exist, provide a non-electronic payment option for those who don’t have access to computers*].
* A student may charge up to \_\_\_\_\_ meals maximum (one charge per meal) as long as they establish and maintain a good credit history of making payments on their food service accounts.
* A staff member may charge up to $\_\_\_\_\_ as long as they establish and maintain a good credit history of making payments on their food service accounts.
* A student who has charged a meal may not charge or purchase "a la carte" item(s), including extra main entrees or make purchases in [*enter any other purchasing areas such as a snack bar, school store, a la carte kiosk, etc.*].
* If a student repeatedly comes to school with no lunch and no money, food service employees must report this to the building principal as this may be a sign of abuse or neglect and the proper authorities should be contacted.
* Schools may deny a meal to a student who pays reduced or full price and who does not provide the required payment for that meal. However if the student who pays reduced or full price has enough money in hand for a meal that day, they will not be denied a meal.

*OR*

* + Schools will provide an alternative meal of [*enter the meal provided*] to a student who pays reduced or full price and who does not provide the required payment for that meal.
* The food service manager or other school personnel will coordinate communications with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to resolve the matter of unpaid charges.
* If food services staff suspects that a student may be abusing this policy, written notice will be provided to the parent(s)/guardian(s) that if he/she continues to abuse this policy, the privilege of charging meals will be refused.

*OR*

* + If food services staff suspects that a student may be abusing this policy, written notice will be provided to the parent(s)/guardian(s) that if he/she continues to abuse this policy, the privileges of an alternative meal will be refused.
* The automated call system will notify parents every *[enter time period]* of any outstanding negative balance in the student’s lunch/meal account. The food service manager will also send home letters each week to parents of students who carry negative balances of $\_\_\_\_\_ and above.
* All accounts must be settled at the *[enter time period]*. Letters will be sent home approximately \_\_\_\_\_ days before the *[enter time period]* to students who have any negative balances. Negative balances of more than $\_\_\_\_\_ not paid in full \_\_\_\_\_ days prior to the *[enter time period]* will force the Corporation to take action to collect unpaid funds by means of collection agencies, small claims court, or any other legal method deemed necessary by the Corporation.
* Students who graduate or withdraw from the corporation and have $\_\_\_\_\_ or more left in their lunch/meal food service account will be notified by mail by food services at the *[enter time period]* and given the option to transfer the funds to another student or to receive a refund. Students who graduate or withdraw from the corporation and have less than *$[enter the dollar amount from above]* will not receive a direct notification by mail, but the household can contact *[enter school contact’s name and information]* to receive a refund. If no response is received within \_\_\_\_\_ days the student’s lunch/meal account will close and the funds will no longer available. Unclaimed remaining balances will be transferred to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ fund.