



## **Policy 544: School Meals**

**Adopted: October 30, 2023**

**Revised: February 15, 2024**

**Adopted by: BLC Board of Directors**

### **PURPOSE:**

Bdote Learning Center (BLC) District 4226-07 participates in the Minnesota Free School Meals Program as outlined in *Minn. Statute 124D.111 Subdivision 1*. In addition, this policy is to ensure that school district employees, families, and students understand the expectations regarding unpaid meal charges.

### **MEAL SERVICE:**

BLC participates in the Free School Meals Program, and therefore, students will receive one breakfast and one lunch at no charge while at school regardless of outstanding meal balance. All reimbursable meals offered must meet state and federal guidelines. Providing an alternate meal on the schedule violates Minnesota law. (*Minn. Statute 124D.111 subdivision 5*), except where a special diet form is prescribed by an authorized medical professional for a specific student.

### **UNPAID MEAL CHARGE & DEBT COLLECTION PROCEDURE:**

1. BLC's goal is to provide nutritious meals to students to promote healthy eating habits and enhance learning as well as to maintain the financial integrity of the National School Breakfast and Lunch program and eliminate stigmatization of children who are unable to pay meal charges.
2. BLC's participates in the Free School Meals Program for both lunch and breakfast, all enrolled students will receive breakfast and lunch at no charge.
3. It is the procedure of BLC to offer breakfast and lunch meals that meet state and federal guidelines.
4. BLC will maintain the dignity of students by prohibiting lunch shaming or otherwise ostracizing the student.
5. BLC will not withdraw a meal from a student once a meal has been placed on a tray or has otherwise been served a meal regardless of outstanding meals balance.
6. Students eligible for free or reduced-price meals will always be served a meal regardless of unpaid food service accounts.
7. Alternate meals may not be provided to students because of school lunch debt. Providing an alternate meal not on the scheduled menu violates a Minnesota law ([Minn. Statute 124D.111, subdivision 5](https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/124D.111) [2022] <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/124D.111>) that requires respectful treatment of students regarding school lunch debt.
8. BLC does not use a collections agency to collect unpaid school meals debt.
9. The school will provide the vended meal provider/Food Service Management Company, which is currently Trio Community Meals (SY23-24), with its school meal charge procedure. Any contract between the school and a third-party provider entered or modified after July 1, 2024, must ensure that the third-party provider adheres to the school meal charge procedure.

### **POINT OF SERVICE:**

For BLC to receive State and Federal reimbursement for meals served, each student must be identified at the point of service, using the MDE Edit & Check Form. All students will be treated respectfully and in accordance with (Minn. Statute 124D.111 subdivision 5).

### **COMMUNICATION OF POLICY:**

This policy and any pertinent supporting information will be provided in writing (i.e., mail, email, back-to-school packet, student handbook, etc.) to:

- All households at or before the start of each school year.
- Students and families who transfer to the school district, at the time of enrollment.
- All school district personnel who are responsible for enforcing this policy.

### **USDA NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT:**

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 based on 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.

### **USDA DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINT**

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/ad-3027.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:
  - a. 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:
  - a. (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. EMAIL:
  - a. [Program.Intake@usda.gov](mailto:Program.Intake@usda.gov)

We are an equal opportunity provider.