

St Helen Charge and Unpaid Meal Policy

St Helen recognizes that adequate nutrition is essential to students' mental, physical and academic growth. All children participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), whether at a free, reduced or paid rate, will receive a lunch meal that meets USDA requirements, regardless of whether the student have sufficient money in the meal- charge accounts or cash-in-hand to pay for the cost of the meal at the time of the service.

Purpose:

This policy is established to provide consistent meal charge and unpaid meal policy procedures.

Responsibilities:

Parents/Guardians:

Parents/Guardians are responsible for paying for all of their student's meal charges. Parents can add money to a student's account by cash or check by sending it in to the school. All envelopes should be labeled with the child's name. Payments can also be made through their Digital Academy account. Through the Digital Academy website parents can check account balances, track spending by viewing student's cafeteria purchases and add money to an account. Any balances will stay in a child's account until they leave the school or graduate.

If a family is in need they may qualify for free or reduced meals. Applications are sent home at the beginning of the school year. Applications are available at any time during the school year by contacting the school office. School meal status is treated as a confidential matter and should not be a consideration for families considering applying for assistance.

Food Service:

Food service is responsible for providing a meal which meets the National School Lunch Program requirements for all students. Food service will be maintaining charge records. If a child has forgotten their lunch regardless of their account status, a lunch will be given to them; however the meal must be charged to their account. Food service will serve lunch regardless of the account status. Students will not be able charge ala carte or snack items to their accounts if they are in the negative.

Federal guidelines prohibit the Food Service Department from writing off bad debts as a result of charged lunches. Every effort will be made to collect for unpaid meals. If an account goes into the negative by \$5.00 or more, an "oops" notice will be sent home in the Thursday folder. The notice will continue until the account is back in the positive. If the account is not repaid in a reasonable amount of time an email/text message will be sent to the child's parent. At the end of the school year, the negative balance will carry over to the next year.

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.