

January 21, 2009

TO: School Parents

SUBJECT: Food Service Meal Charge Policy

At a time when food and labor costs are increasing, it becomes critical to receive payment from families for meals provided. The Houston Independent School District (HISD) will be implementing a food service meal charge policy beginning with school year 2008-2009. The purpose of this policy is to reduce the number of meals that have been charged by students.

The policy of the Houston Independent School District will be that meals may not be charged. Students who receive a meal without the means to pay will accrue an unpaid meal balance. Once a student's unpaid meal balance reaches \$10 or more, the cafeteria manager will provide the student with an alternative meal.

HISD recognizes that payment for meals received by students is the responsibility of the parents and/or guardians of the student. Therefore, all communication regarding unpaid meals owed by the student will be directed toward the parents and/or guardians. If alternative meals are served, staff members will be allowed to explain to students the reason for the alternative meal.

HISD will utilize a progressively rigorous program of collections for unpaid meals. This program is necessary to provide meals at the lowest price possible for all the students served by HISD. The collections program ensures that all persons with the ability to pay for meals do, in fact, pay for meals received.

Parents and/or guardians of students who cannot afford to pay for meals served should apply for meal benefits under the free or reduced price meal program offered within HISD. Applications for free or reduced price meal benefits will be processed in a timely manner once received in their entirety by the school system. For your convenience, an application is included with this letter.

If you have any questions please contact Dave Richardson, Food Service Executive General Manager, 713-491-5700.

Sincerely,

Connie Berger