



## Great Hearts Negative Balance Collection Policy

### **Purpose**

The goal of Great Hearts in partnership with Preferred Meals is to provide students with nutritious and delicious food each day. However, unpaid meal charges place a large financial burden on our schools. The purpose of this policy is to remain compliant with the USDA Child Nutrition Program as well as to provide clear guidelines for the collection of outstanding student meal balances.

### **Policy**

It is the responsibility of the parent to provide their children with their meals. They can do this in one of 3 ways:

1. Send a breakfast/lunch with the child to school.
2. Pay for a meal to be purchased at the school.
3. Apply to determine eligibility to receive free or reduced meals (.30 cents for breakfast and .40 cents for lunch).

A maximum limit of negative twenty (\$20) dollars can be charged to an account. Once it has reached that negative balance amount of \$20.00, a student will not be able to purchase any additional meals or a la carte items until the negative balance has been resolved. The school may discreetly offer the child an alternative snack

(example: carrots, pretzels and milk) at no charge. They will not be able to obtain seconds (charged at full price, \$4.00) or a la carte items without being prepaid.

The same policy will apply to adults and faculty participating in the school lunch program, except that adults will not be provided an alternative snack.

Notification of account balances will be provided to the parents on a regular basis by email or phone. Parents/Guardians are responsible for meal payment. The parent can prepay at [mymealtime.com](http://mymealtime.com). They can also provide cash or check (preferred) directly to the school. Checks are to be made payable to the campus. Great Hearts strongly encourages parents to pre-pay for their student's meals.

Both Great Hearts and Preferred Meals are committed to providing meals for students who choose to participate in the program. However, it is the responsibility of the parent to satisfy all financial obligations to the lunch program in a timely manner. If a parent is unable to provide a meal for their child, they are encouraged to complete an application for free or reduced meals available in English and Spanish at any school. If determined to be eligible, children will receive the regular meal at a free or reduced rate. Applications can be completed at any time during the school year should circumstances change. Applications should be completed for renewal each year.

A refund request must be submitted in writing for any remaining balances for graduated or withdrawn students before it will be provided. A positive balance will rollover to the following school year.

If you have any questions, contact the Director of Campus Operations at your academy or the Child Nutrition Director, April Hufty, at [April.Hufty@greatheartstx.org](mailto:April.Hufty@greatheartstx.org).