
STUDENT MEAL CHARGES

The Board recognizes the impact that wellness has on student achievement. To support this, students are provided competitively priced, nutritious and well-balanced meals also known as reimbursable meals at each District school. A reimbursable meal is defined as a meal consisting of meat/meat alternative, grains, fruits, vegetables, and a milk further defined by the National School Lunch Program requirements. Parents/guardians are also expected to support this by maintaining a positive balance in their student's meal account throughout the school year.

Parents/guardians whose circumstances make this difficult are encouraged to apply for reduced-priced or free meals under federal guidelines. Any family that falls into a negative balance will receive a written notification to encourage them to apply for free or reduced meal benefits.

This policy establishes tenets for unpaid student accounts that balance the responsibility of parents to pay these charges with the necessity of treating each student in the serving line with respect regardless of the student's eligibility.

Parents/guardians are notified of this Policy by letter from the student's assigned school, mailed to the home and emailed to the email on file. The District staff (school staff and nutrition staff) are trained yearly to support and implement this policy.

Students Without Cash or Positive Balance

No student will be denied a breakfast or lunch regardless of account status. Students with an excess negative balance will be provided a standard "reimbursable" meal based on daily offerings such as sunflower butter and jelly on whole wheat bread, daily vegetable, fruit and milk. Staff must take reasonable steps to minimize statements or actions that overly identify children eligible for free meals. Students with a negative balance will not be allowed any a la carte purchases including milk. This policy applies equally to all students regardless of free/reduced/or full pay status.

Unresolved Debt:

In the event the student account has insufficient funds, the following procedures will be followed:

- At the middle and high school level, the cashier will notify students of their balances.
- At the elementary level, cashiers will not directly inform students of a negative balance.
- At all levels, a letter is sent by one of the following means:
 - Emailed to the parent/guardian email on file
 - Sent home with the student
 - Mailed home to the parent/guardian
- When a student's account reaches a balance due of \$20.00:
 - The Food Service Department will continue to try to contact the parents until the debt is paid. Contact options include notes sent home with students, letters through U.S. Mail, email and telephone calls
 - Building principals, teachers, secretaries and guidance counselors will be notified to help facilitate if needed
 - If the balance exceeds \$50.00, the parents/guardians have made no attempt to rectify the account and fail to send meals from home for the student, then the Superintendent or designee is authorized to consider contacting a debt collection agency.

On May 15 each school year, all unpaid student accounts with delinquent debt may, upon the decision of the Superintendent or Food Services Director, be assigned to a collection agency. At the end of June each year, delinquent debt becomes bad debt.

The Director of Food Services, with the concurrence of the Superintendent, is responsible for implementing the procedures for student meal charges in EFDA-R.

The Director of Food Services will annually report:

1. The cost, if any, for an alternative meal at the elementary and middle school level.
2. By school level: amount of unpaid meal charges, the number of students involved and the number of unpaid balances that have been sent to collection.

Legal References:

Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, Public Law 111-296
RSA 189:11-a, Food and Nutrition Programs
Section 204 of Public Law 108-265, Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004
42 U.S.C. §1751 et seq., National School Lunch Act
NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed. 306.11, Food & Nutrition Services
15 U.S.C. § 1692-1695 federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA)
42 U.S.C. 1758(b)(6), Use or disclosure of information
Civil Rights Act of 1964 & 7 C.F.R. Part 15, Subpart A & B
2 C.F.R. §200.426
7 C.F.R §210.09
7 C.F.R §210.10
7 C.F.R §210.15
7 C.F.R. §245.5
USDA SP 46-2016 - No later than July 1, 2017, all SFA's operating the Federal school meal program are required to have a written meal charge policy.
USDA Guidance SP37-2016: Meaningful Access for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) in the School Meal Programs
RSA 358-C, New Hampshire's Unfair, Deceptive or Unreasonable Collection Practices Act;
NH Dept. of Education Technical Advisory - Food and Nutrition Programs

Legal References Disclaimer: *These references are not intended to be considered part of this policy, nor should they be taken as a comprehensive statement of the legal basis for the Board to enact this policy, nor as a complete recitation of related legal authority. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.*

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 08/13/2012
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