

**Blue Water Middle College Academy (BWMCA)
Board of Education Policy**

Food Service and Unpaid Meal Charges

The Blue Water Middle College Academy, Board of Education with the adoption of this policy, will make every effort to ensure every student receives the nutrition they need in order to stay focused during the school day, to minimize the identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals and maintain the financial integrity of the BWMCA as a non-profit school food service account.

In the event that the BWMCA offers a Food Service program it shall comply with Federal and State regulations pertaining to the selection, preparation, delivery, consumption, and disposal of food and beverages, including but not limited to the current USDA's school meal pattern requirements for Americans and USDA's Smart Snacks in School Nutrition standards, as well as to the fiscal management of the program. In addition, as required by law, a food safety program based on the principles of the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) system shall be implemented with the intent of preventing food-borne illnesses. For added safety and security, access to the facility and the food stored and prepared therein shall be limited to food service staff and other authorized persons.

The BWMCA Board, its representatives, employees or volunteers, will not discriminate on any basis including but not limited, to race, color, national origin, sex (including sexual orientation or transgender identity), disability, age (except as authorized by law), religion, military status, ancestry, or genetic information (collectively, "Protected Classes") in its educational programs or activities. Students and all other members of the BWMCA community and third parties are encouraged to promptly report incidents and unlawful discrimination and/or retaliation to a teacher, administrator, supervisor, or other BWMCA official so that the Board may address the conduct.

In the event that the BWMCA, Board of Education, offers a food service program, it shall provide food service for the purchase and consumption of meals for all students. Students who qualify for Free or Reduced meals may never be denied meals; even if they have accrued a negative balance from other purchases in the cafeteria.

The operation and supervision of the Food Service program shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent and/or designee. Food services shall be operated with revenue from students, staff, Federal reimbursement, surplus food and with the support of non-Federal funds if necessary. All maintenance and replacement of equipment is the responsibility of the program.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish administrative guidelines for the conduct of the school lunch program shall include the provisions for the following:

- a. The maintenance of sanitary, neat premises from fire and health hazards.
- b. The preparation of food that complies with Federal Food Safety regulations.
- c. The planning and execution of menus in compliance with USDA requirements.
- d. The purchase of foods and supplies in accordance with State and Federal law, USDA regulations and BWMCA Board Policy.
- e. Complying with food holds and recalls in accordance with USDA regulations.

- f. The accounting and disposition of food service funds pursuant to State and Federal law and USDS regulations.
- g. The safekeeping and storage of food and food equipment pursuant to State and Federal law and USDA regulations.
- h. The regular maintenance and replacement of equipment.
- i. All BWMCA employees whose salaries are paid for with USDA funds or non-federal funds used to meet a match or cost share requirement, must comply with the government's guidance on Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal awards and/or Time and Effort Reporting.

A periodic review of the Food Service accounts shall be made by the Superintendent and/or designee. Any surplus fund for the National School Lunch Program shall be used to reduce the cost of the service to students or to purchase cafeteria equipment. Surplus funds from a la'carte foods purchased using funds from the non-profit food service account must accrue to the non-profit food service account. Bad Debt incurred through the inability to collect meal payments from students is not an allowable cost chargeable to any Federal program. Any related collection costs, including legal cost, arising from such bad debts after they have been determined to be uncollectable, are also unallowable.

Substitutions to the standard meal requirement shall be made, at no additional charge, for students who are certified by a licensed physician to have a disability which restricts his/her diet, in accordance with the criteria set forth in 7 CFR 15(b)(3). To qualify for such substitutions the medical certification must identify:

- a. The student's disability and the major life activity affected by the disability.
- b. An explanation of why the disability affects the students diet; and
- c. the food(s) to be omitted from the student's diet and the food or choice of foods that must be substituted ((e.g., caloric modifications or use of liquid nutritive formula).

On a case by case bases, substitutions to the standard meal requirement may be made at no additional charge for students who are not "disabled persons", but have a signed statement from a qualified medical authority that the student cannot consume certain food items due to medical or other special dietary needs. To qualify for consideration and substitutions the medical statement must identify:

- a. the medical or dietary need that restricts the student's diet; and
- b. the food(s) to be omitted from the student's diet and the food(s) or choice of foods that may be substituted.

Non-disabled students who need a nutritional equivalent milk substitute, only a signed request by a parent or guardian is required.

The BWMCA shall serve only nutritious food as determined by the Food Service Department in compliance with the current USDA Nutrition Standards for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs,

the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition guidelines. All foods and beverages unassociated with the food service program must comply with the current School Nutrition Guidelines and may vended in accordance with the most current legislation.

In order to prevent the identification of students eligible for free or reduced meals, the BWMCA has elected to prohibit the charging of a la carte or “extra” items by any student with a negative account balance, regardless of the child’s eligibility status.

Policy Communication

This policy will be provided in writing:

- a. to all families at the start of each school year,
- b. will be included with the BWMCA’s Free or Reduced Meal applications;
- c. and to students transferring in, throughout the school year.

This will be accomplished by adding the policy to the back-to-school packet, new enrollment packets and inserted into the school’s student handbook, if it is provided in print and to families annually. The policy will be posted on the BWMCA’s website.

The policy will also be provided to all school and district level staff responsible for the policy’s enforcement. This includes:

- a. Food service staff,
- b. professionals responsible for collecting payment for meals at the point of service,
- c. staff involved in notifying families of low or negative balances;
- d. and staff involved in enforcing any other aspects of the policy.

Provided to the BWMCA’s student support staff including:

- a. administrators,
- b. school social workers,
- c. school nurses,
- d. homeless liaison and;
- e. other staff members assisting students in need.

Unpaid meal charges may suggest that a family is facing a financial set back and coordinating with support service personnel may help to ensure we are sensitive to our student’s needs.

Refund of Positive Account Balances

When a student is leaving the district and has a positive, meal account balance, all funds will be refunded to the parent/guardian of the student. It is the BWMCA's policy to make every effort to return unused meal money to the rightful owner by the end of the fiscal school year.

Family Contact Low or Negative Account Balances

When notifying a family of low or negative account balances for the first time, the policy shall be shared again. The BWMCA will mention the policy on reminder calls and include the policy in written notices of low or negative account balances.

Unpaid Meal Charges

Students who qualify for free or reduced meals, may never be denied a meal, even if they have accrued a negative balance from other purchases in the cafeteria. If a student is eligible to receive reduced price or paid meals but do not have the money in their account or in their hand, to cover the cost of their meal at the time of service, the meal must be provided.

Accordingly, if a student has money to purchase a reduced price or paid meal at the time of the meal service, the student must be provided a meal. The BWMCA may not use the student's money to repay previously unpaid charges if the student intended to use the money to purchase that day's meal.

A meal will be provided and must accommodate the student's special dietary needs. (As long as the required documentation is already on file.)

Notification of Negative Account Balances

1. Student food service accounts will be monitored every two weeks. When an account is in the negative; all efforts will be made to collect the funds.
2. The designated BWMCA staff member will make an initial phone call to the parent/guardian, informing the parent/guardian of the negative amount due and requesting the account be made whole. The Food Service and Unpaid Meal Charges policy, will be referenced.
3. An outstanding balance letter and an application for free or reduced meals (if not be on file), which will include a copy of our policy, will then be sent from the BWMCA to the parent/guardian.
4. If the BWMCA staff believe the family may benefit from a conversation or visit from the BWMCA Support Staff, (ex: Homeless Liaison, Social Worker etc.) a referral will be made.
5. The responsible staff member will document all parent/guardian communications/contact made by method, date and time. (Including the staff member's name and position.)
6. If at the end of the school fiscal year, the account is still in the negative and the BWMCA had documented all attempts to retrieve the funds. It will then be classified as designated delinquent debt.

Delinquent Debt

When payment is overdue, the debt is classified as delinquent as long as it is considered collectable and efforts are being made to collect it. A debt owed to a non-profit school Food Service Account remains on the accounting documents until it is either collected or is determined to be uncollectable at the end of the school fiscal year. At which time it becomes bad debt.

Bad Debt

Bad debt is uncollectable/delinquent debt that the BWMCA has determined to be uncollectable by the end of the school year in which the debt was incurred. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) indicate the loss/elimination of uncollectable accounts should be done in the year that the sale occurred. Therefore, when the BWMCA closes out the fiscal year end books (June 30th), the food service account is to be made whole.

Once it is classified as bad debt, the BWMCA will use non-Federal funding sources to reimburse the Food Service account for the total amount of the bad debt.

Once the uncollected/delinquent debt charges are converted to bad debt, records relating to the charges will be maintained in accordance with the record retention requirements in 7 CFR §210.9(b) (17) and 7 CFR §210.15(b). The following records should be maintained to document the appropriate establishment and handling of the bad debt;

- a. Evidence of efforts to collect unpaid meal charges in accordance with the unpaid meal charge policy;
- b. Evidence the collection efforts fell within the time frame and methods of this policy,
- c. Financial documentation showing when the unpaid meal charge(s) became an operating loss; and
- d. Evidence of funds written off as bad debt were restored to the BWMCA Food Service account using non-Federal sources.

Board Approved:

MCL 380.1272m 1272a, 1272d et seq., 7 CFR Parts 15b, 127, 210, 215, 220, 225, 226,240, 245, 3015.
42 USC 1758, 1760.

Overcoming Unpaid Meal Challenge USDA-FNS, (May 2017)

Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 and Richard B Russell National School Lunch Act.

Child Nutrition Act of 1966, 42 USC 1771 et seq.

OMB Circular No. A-87.

USDA Smart Snacks in School Good Guidelines (July 1, 2014).

SP32-2015 Statement Supporting Accommodations for Children with Disabilities in the Child Nutrition Programs.

Record Retention Requirements 7 CFR §210.9(b) (17) and 7 CFR §210.15(b)