



Book	Board of Education Policies
Section	8000 - Community
Title	School Lunch Charge Policy and Prohibition Against Shaming
Code	8140
Status	Active
Adopted	May 9, 2023
Last Reviewed	April 18, 2023

SCHOOL LUNCH CHARGE POLICY AND PROHIBITION AGAINST SHAMING POLICY 8140

The Board of Education recognizes that access to proper nutrition is essential for student health and wellness, and a necessary condition for students to engage fully in their education. This policy will ensure that, regardless of circumstance, students will always have access to nutritious meals through a process that prioritizes respect and discretion, and shall apply to those school buildings within the district that have full-service cafeterias.

PROTECTION AGAINST SHAMING

Under no circumstance shall students be shamed or treated differently in response to how their meal is being financially transacted. Students shall not be publicly identified or stigmatized, and district staff shall not discuss a student's financial matters in front of other students.

The district shall not take any action directed at a student to collect unpaid school meal fees. However, the district may discreetly notify students of relevant information such as account balances in the case of full-pay transactions, or the items that are available through the free or reduced-price lunch program.

STUDENT ACCOUNTS

The district offers parents or guardians the option to pre-fund and automatically replenish meal accounts to ensure that said accounts are adequately funded. Details are available on the district website.

Student Account Balances

1. The district's computerized payment system will allow for automatic replenishment when a balance reaches a certain amount set by the parent or guardian. The district shall encourage parents or guardians to utilize this option. Parents or guardians shall be discreetly notified of student account balances regularly.
2. When a student's account balance falls below the amount set by the parent or guardian and whenever a meal is thereafter purchased, the district will discreetly notify the parent or guardian of the balance, and of the process to refill the account. This notification will continue regularly until the account is

replenished. Parents or guardians must repay all unpaid balances remaining at the end of the year or before their child leaves the district, whichever occurs first.

3. Upon notification from the Food Service Department of students with negative balances of at least five meals, the building principal or a designee, in conjunction with the school social worker, shall determine if the student is directly certified to be eligible for free meals, and make at least 2 attempts to reach the parent or guardian to assist them in the application process for free or reduced-price meals, and to determine if there are other issues within the household causing the insufficient funds and offer appropriate assistance.
4. If a parent or guardian regularly fails to provide meal money and does not qualify for free or reduced-price meals, the district may take other actions as appropriate, including notifying the local department of social services if neglect is suspected.
5. A student's parent or guardian may provide written permission to the district to withhold a meal in the event of unpaid meal charges in excess of those permitted herein.

FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE LUNCH

The district shall notify all parents or guardians in writing on an annual basis at the start of the school year and to families transferring during the year, of the application process for free and reduced-priced meals.

This policy shall be published in appropriate school and district publications. All staff involved in implementing and enforcing this policy, including any agents acting on the district's behalf, shall also be notified of these requirements and their responsibilities. If the district becomes aware that a student is so eligible, it shall file an application for the student. Staff responsible for assisting foster, homeless, and migrant students shall coordinate with Food Service Department staff to ensure such students receive free school meals.

System of Accounting for Free and Reduced-Price Meals

To comply with state guidelines and maintain a system of accounting for free and reduced-price meals, the Board of Education shall:

1. Allow only meals eligible for reimbursement through the free and reduced-price lunch program to be charged back to the school, which excludes: extras, à la carte items, side dishes, additional meals, and snacks;
2. Provide for the Food Service Department to use a computer-generated point of sale system, which identifies and records all meals and also collects repayments.

Charges for free and reduced-price meals will be counted and claimed for reimbursement on the day that the student charged (received) the meal, not the day the charge is paid back. When charges are paid, these monies are not to be considered "à la carte" transactions, as a section on the daily cash report or deposit summary reads "charges paid."

The Food Service Department shall use the computer-generated system to:

1. Maintain a list of students who have charged meals and the number of occurrences for each student;
2. Update the list each month and send the revised list to the principal, the Director of Pupil Personnel Services, and the Assistant Superintendent for Business and Administration, or a designee.

UNPAID MEAL CHARGES, DEBT COLLECTION AND REMAINING ACCOUNT BALANCES

1. Unpaid meal balances are a financial burden to the district and taxpayers and can negatively affect the school program. Unpaid meal balances shall be considered "delinquent" as per the district's accounting practices. The district shall attempt to recover unpaid meal balances before the end of the school year,

but may continue efforts into the next school year. The district shall notify parents or guardians of unpaid meal balances at regular intervals, and may engage in collection activities through district staff, which do not involve debt collectors, as defined in federal law (15 USC §1692a), and may not charge fees or interest. The district shall offer repayment plans, and may take other actions that do not result in harm or shame to the child, until unpaid balances are paid.

2. Remaining funds may be carried over to the next school year. When students leave the district or graduate, the district will attempt to contact the parent or guardian to return the remaining funds. Parents or guardians may request that funds be transferred to other students (e.g., siblings, unpaid accounts). All transfer requests must be in writing.

Unclaimed funds remaining after six months shall be absorbed by the school lunch fund.

STAFF

Staff members are allowed to purchase food from the district's food services. However, all purchases must be paid for at the point of sale (cash or payment account). Staff members are not allowed to purchase meals to be repaid later. Administration, including building principals and designees, working with the Director of Food Services, shall ensure that all district and Food Service Department staff with responsibilities under this policy will be trained annually and throughout the year on the provisions of this policy and the requirements of Education Law section 908.

The District will provide the Food Service Management Company with a copy of this policy and any future updates as may be approved by the Board of Education.

Ref: 42 USC §1779 (Child Nutrition Act of 1966)

42 USC §§1758(f)(1); 1766(a) (National School Lunch Act)

2 CFR §200.426 (accounting for debt in federal programs)

7 CFR §§210.9 210.12; 210.19; 220.13; 245.5 (accounting in federal school meal programs)

First Reading (Proposed) Presented to the Board of Education on April 11th, 2023

Second Reading Scheduled for April 18, 2023 was Tabled to May 9, 2023

Adopted on May 9, 2023

Edgemont Union Free School District