

## **Food Services Account Policy**

### **I. PURPOSE/POLICY:**

The purpose of this policy is to define how the Bristol Warren Regional School District (BWRSD) shall collect and manage unpaid meal charges in compliance with the National School Lunch Act and associated regulations, while recognizing that all children need nutritious meals in order to learn.

The goals of this policy are:

- To establish consistent district-wide procedures regarding meal charges and collection of such charges
- To establish guidelines for the purchase and sales of school meals

The procedures of this policy shall be published in student handbooks and other school notifications to ensure parents/guardians are aware of the potential consequences of meal debt.

### **II. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:**

The Food Services Department:

- Responsible for maintaining meal charge records, enforcing the parameters of this policy associated with meal charges, and notifying the School District of outstanding balances

The School District:

- Responsible for notifying the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) with written documentation of overdue meal accounts and implementing appropriate courses of action to collect unpaid charges

The Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

- Responsible for prompt payment in accordance with the Food Services Department's published guidelines. If financial issues develop, early contact with the District's Business Office is advised to avoid fees and penalties.

### **III. ADMINISTRATION:**

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are responsible for payment to the Food Service Program for all meal charges. In cases of extenuating circumstances, the Business Office may exercise discretion in commencing implementation of the resolution sections of this policy if there is high expectation that payment in full will be made in a reasonable timeframe.

### **A. Meal Charge Criteria**

Only reimbursable breakfasts, lunches and milk are available as a charge. Students with a negative balance in their food service meal account shall be allowed to continue to order lunch from the menu options for that day, but are not allowed to charge any ala carte or extra items.

### **B. Notification and Resolution for Unpaid Charges/Negative Balances**

Parent(s)/guardian(s) of students with unpaid meals will receive:

1. A charge notice from the Business Office, which will be sent home immediately after the first allowed negative charge. These will be in a sealed envelope addressed to the parent(s)/guardian(s). In addition, e-mail may be used if available.
2. If the charge has not been paid within 5 business days, the Business Office will place a call to the parent(s)/guardian(s).
3. If the charge remains unpaid, after the placement of the telephone call, the Business Office will send a letter demanding payment, along with a Free and Reduced Meals Application home to the household, cc Principal.
4. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) continues to carry a balance and/or do not provide lunch money to the student and does not qualify for the free or reduced meal benefits, Food Services shall inform the Principal and Business Administrator, who shall determine a method of debt payment.

### **IV. POLICY DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION:**

The Business Office will disseminate the Food Service Account Policy to all school level staff responsible for policy enforcement. This includes school food service professionals responsible for collecting payment for meals at the point of service, staff involved in notifying families of low or negative balances, and staff involved in enforcing any other aspects of this policy. In addition, school administrators, social workers, school nurses, the homeless liaison, and other staff members who may assist students in need shall be informed of the policy.

Students and families will be informed of this policy at the start of each school year or upon enrollment to the district. As appropriate, sections of this policy will be included in school handbooks and/or online portals used to access student accounts.

#### **LEGAL REF:**

USDA 7 CFR 245.5, 210.12

National School Lunch Act 42 U.S.C. 1758(b)(2)(A)

CROSS REF: BWRSD EFB

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