School Nutrition Program Charge Policy

Policy Information

Series E-Support Services

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Policy # EFD

File: EFD

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM CHARGE POLICY

The School Committee is committed to providing students with healthy, nutritious meals each day so they can focus on school work, while also maintaining the financial integrity of meal programs. and minimizing any impact on students with charges for a la carte purchases.

The District provides free meals to all students (one free meal per meal service period.). However, unpaid charges for additional meals, or a la carte items place a large financial burden on the school district, as food services is a self-supporting entity within the district. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with federal reporting requirements of the USDA Child Nutrition Program, as well as provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student balances.

Charges and Balances

Each student will be allowed to take one regular meal per meal service period. Students may want to receive additional meals, or to purchase a la carte items. Students will pay for additional meals at the regular rate approved by the School Committee. Student Accounts will be maintained by the District Food and Nutrition Program as prescribed by the District and delineated in the Student Handbook.

The parent/guardian is responsible for any meal charges incurred beyond the free meals provided. If there is a financial hardship, a parent/guardian should contact food services directly to discuss payment options such as an individualized repayment plan.

Payments

Payments for additional food purchases beyond the regular meal will be made to the District Food and Nutrition Program. Parents can adjust the settings of the online system to receive notifications regarding account balances at regular intervals. At no time shall any staff member give payment notices to students unless that student is known to be an emancipated minor who is fully responsible for themselves or over the age of 18. If parents/guardians have issues with student purchases they should contact the building principal/administrative assistant for assistance.

Parents/Guardians may pay in advance for anticipated purchases beyond the free meal allowed during each meal service period. Further details are available on the school district webpage and in student handbooks. Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a child may be without a positive balance in their account on any given day. Any remaining funds for a particular student will be carried over to the next school year.

All school cafeterias possess computerized point of sale/cash register systems that maintain records of all monies deposited and spent for each student and those records are available to parents/guardians by setting up an online account (see student handbooks for more details) or by speaking with the school's food service manager. The point of sale system is designed to prevent direct identification of a student's account status.

Refunds

Refunds for withdrawn and/or graduating students require a written request for a refund of any money remaining in their account to be submitted. Graduating students also have the option to transfer funds to a sibling's account or to donate to a student in need with a written request.

Delinquent Accounts/Collections

The Superintendent shall ensure that there are appropriate and effective collection procedures and internal controls within the school district's business office that meet the requirements of law.

Policy Communications

This policy shall be communicated to all staff and families at the beginning of each school year and to families transferring to the district during the year.

LEGAL REFS: MGL 71:72; USDA School Meal Program Guidelines May 2017,
Chapter 28 of the Acts of 2023

CROSS REFS: JQ, Student Fees, Fines & Charges
EFE, Civil Rights Complaint Policy for Child Nutrition Programs

SOURCE: MASC – Updated 2023

Approved 5/1/24

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