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FOOD SERVICE MEAL ACCOUNT BALANCES

The district encourages all parents/guardians provide a healthy breakfast and lunch for their student/s. The district provides the opportunity to purchase breakfast and lunch that meets or exceeds the federal nutrition standards from the school cafeteria. The student lunch account remains with the student throughout his/her time with the Timberlane Regional School District.

Payment is expected no later than when the meal is served and can be made by using the online payment system that is available on the district website. Fees associated with the use of this online system shall be borne by the depositor. Meals may also be paid for at the time of purchase with cash or personal check.

Federal assistance is available through the Free and Reduced Priced Meals Program to any family that qualifies. The district requires all families to return this application at the beginning of each school year. The "Free and Reduced Price School Meals Family Application" is available both on the district/school websites and at each school and can be submitted during the school year if financial circumstances change. The applications are reviewed at the district central office based on federal guidelines, and families are notified by mail of the results.

It is the opinion of this district that financial hardships will happen and will need to be addressed on a case-by-case basis before other actions are instituted to see if other acceptable resolutions can be arranged. Parents/guardians who refuse to communicate with district officials regarding their student's negative meal balance will be subject to full prosecution.

Additionally, it is the opinion of this district that children who are not provided with a bagged lunch from home or the funds to purchase a lunch at school, on a regular basis, constitutes child neglect and may be reported to the appropriate child welfare authorities.

Collection of Negative Meal Account Balances

Effective February 1, 2014 negative meal account balances will not be allowed. Food service debt must be recovered annually. The district has an obligation to taxpayers to ensure that students do not have a negative lunch balance at the end of the school year. The district will take all necessary steps to prevent and collect negative lunch balances. Policy DO/EFA – R outlines the procedure that is followed to collect a student's account balance that is negative. In the event that a student's meal account is in the negative, and attempts to recover the bad debt from the parent or guardian is unsuccessful, the district may use the following actions to collect the bad debt. Actions include but are not limited to: prohibiting the student from purchasing meals, or extra a la carte items, prohibiting a student from participating in graduation activities, withholding a student's diploma, hiring a collection agency, setting up a payment plan, and using small claims court to collect the bad debt.*

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Positive Meal Account Balances

Any student accounts with positive balances at the end of the school year will be automatically carried over to the next school year. If requested, the balances will be refunded to the account owner. Students who have graduated or have left the district will have account balances refunded to the account owner at the building level or transferred to another student account at the request of the account owner.

Student with Documented Dietary Needs

Nothing in this policy prohibits providing a meal to a student with dietary needs such as, but not limited to, diabetes, as documented through a health plan, Sec 504, or in an IEP. If the meal is medically required, and the student has a negative balance, or does not have cash to purchase the meal, the necessary dietary needs will be met.

Staff Account Balances

The district provides the opportunity for staff to purchase meals from the school cafeteria. Staff may pay per meal or establish a prepaid account, but food cannot be purchased on credit. If a staff member's meal account is positive at the end of the school year, it will be automatically carried over to the next school year. If requested, the balance will be refunded to the account owner. It is the responsibility of the staff member to monitor his/her account balance. Administrators will have authority and discretion to charge meals or items for guests, staff and/or students on a case-by-case basis, as long as the debt does not go beyond \$20.00.

Bad Debt Transfer

Meal debt may not be carried over year to year by students. The food service operation must be reimbursed by another fund on an annual basis; at which point the meal debt belongs to the school district. The school board may authorize a transfer from the general fund to the lunch program to cover the bad debt at the end of the school year, and to put any subsequently recovered funds received by the district back into the general fund.

**See Meal Charging Guidance NH Department of Education 2012, and OMB CIRCULAR A-87 (REVISED 05/10/04) at http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/assets/agencyinformation_circulars_pdf/a87_2004.pdf*

~~The district encourages all parents/guardians provide a healthy breakfast and lunch for their student/s. The district provides the opportunity to purchase breakfast and lunch that meets or exceeds the federal nutrition standards from the school cafeteria for a very modest price.~~

~~Payment for meals is required in advance and is expected no later than when the meal is served. Advance payments may be sent to the schools by personal check, but the district encourages the use of the free online payment system that is available on the district~~

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~~website (Nutrikids.com). The cost for this service is covered by the district. This online system also provides transaction details even if the online payment option is not utilized. The student lunch account remains with the student throughout his time with the Timberlane Regional School District from elementary school through high school. All balances (both positive and negative) will remain on the students account from one year to the next. All student negative balances should be paid by the end of the school year so not to cause undue financial hardship on the program. Seniors will need to pay all negative balances before graduation~~

~~Federal assistance is available through the Free and Reduced Priced Meals Program to any family that qualifies. The district requires all families to return this application at the beginning of each school year. The "Free and Reduced Price School Meals Family Application" is available both on the district/school websites and at each school and can be resubmitted multiple times during the school year if financial circumstances change. The applications are reviewed at the district office based on federal guidelines and families are notified by mail of the results. Participation in the Free & Reduced Program is completely confidential. The automated checkout system makes it impossible to tell which student participates in the Free & Reduced Program. The additional benefit to the district for approved Free & Reduced applications is that some funding opportunities are based on the level of approved applications.~~

Collection of Negative Balances

~~The following procedure is to be followed if a student's account balance is negative. All elementary students will continue to receive the standard qualified meal. A "Free and Reduced Price School Meals Family Application" should be offered when determined to be appropriate.~~

~~Every week each school principal is provided a list of their students who maintain negative balances. At the same time, letters to the parents/guardians are sent home if a student's account balance is in a deficit of more than \$20.00. Repeated or consistent negative balances will be followed up by a personal note from the school principal. If a negative balance continues with no payments, then collection calls are required by the principal.~~

~~Neither middle nor high school students will be allowed to carry a negative balance greater than \$20.00 on their student lunch account. No meal will be served to high school students who have a negative balance in excess of \$20.00 or cash to pay for a meal. Middle school students will be allowed to receive a meal, but will not be allowed to purchase a la carte items without cash.~~

~~It is the opinion of this district that financial hardships will happen and will need to be addressed on a case by case basis before other actions are instituted to see if other acceptable resolutions can be arranged. Parents/Guardians who refuse to communicate~~

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~~with district officials regarding their student's negative lunch balance will be subject to full prosecution.~~

~~Additional action is authorized to collect this debt and may be instituted on a case by case basis. These authorized actions include, but are not limited to; withholding progress or report cards; limiting student participation in nonacademic programs such as athletics, music, clubs and social events; hiring a collection agency and other legal means of debt collection, such as small claims court.~~

~~Additionally, it is the opinion of this district that children who are not provided with a bagged lunch from home or the funds to purchase a lunch at school, on a regular basis, constitutes child neglect and may be reported to the appropriate child welfare authorities.~~

~~The district has both an obligation to educate students and an obligation to protect the district taxpayers by not supplying free meals.~~

Refund of Account Balances

~~Students who have graduated or have left the district will have account balances refunded to the account owner at the building level or transferred to another student account at the request of the account owner.~~

Staff Account Balances

~~The district provides the opportunity for staff to purchase breakfast and lunch from the school cafeteria for a modest price. Staff may pay per meal or establish a prepaid account, but no food may be purchased on credit.~~