

School Lunch Program Meal Charge**Belief**

The Ashland School District recognizes that the basic primary need of nourishment is essential not only for one's wellbeing, but also a key factor for learning. As a result of this belief, no student will be excluded from receiving school breakfast and/or school lunch based on the status of their student meal account.

Definitions

A la carte choices are items not considered to be part of the published main meal as well as additional servings of the published main meal.

School breakfast and lunch are defined as the published main meal for breakfast and lunch and does not include a la carte items.

School Lunch Program references the School District program for providing school breakfast and lunch.

Student meal account is associated with each student who accesses the School Lunch Program; funds can be added by cash received, personal checks, and/or by parents/guardians adding funds through the School District's online student meal account program (information on the online account program can be found on the School District website <http://www.interlakes.org/district-departments/food-services.html> or <https://www.schoolpaymentportal.com/Default.aspx>)

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the School District. The goals of this policy are to:

- treat all students and families with dignity regarding meal accounts;
- establish a consistent School District Policy regarding charges and collection of charges;
- support positive situations with School District staff, School District business policies, students and parents/guardians to the maximum extent possible;
- establish policies that are age-appropriate;
- encourage parents/guardians to assume responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student; and
- encourage an understanding that the Federal regulations prevents school districts from having negative account balances associated with school lunch programs.

Responsibilities

- The Food Service Contractor is responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the School District of outstanding balances.
- The School District:
 - Is responsible for collaborating with the Food Service Contractor and families to settle outstanding balances.
 - Recognizes that there are many life events that impact families and when made aware of such situations that may impact a family's ability to pay outstanding balances the School District will work to find means to support the family.
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are responsible:
 - when possible for maintaining account balances and settling outstanding balances; and
 - for establishing with their child(ren) any restrictions they choose to place on use of their child(ren)'s account.

Free or Reduced-Price Meals

See Policy #3540, Free and Reduced-Price Lunch Policy; School Board policies are available online through the School District's website or by contacting the Superintendent's Office at (603) 279 – 7947.

Administration*Elementary, Middle and High School Students*

- Notices of low or balances owed will be sent to parents/guardians.
- When a student's account reaches a negative balance, the student shall still receive a school breakfast and/or lunch which will be charged to the student's account.

Negative Balances

- Parents/guardians shall be notified by either letter, email, phone, online payment system, or School District notification system stating that the student's meal account balance is negative and will be asked to resolve the debt and replenish the student's meal account either by cash, check or through the School District student meal account online payment system.
- Included in communication regarding negative balances will be contact information for the School Principal and District Business Administrator and with an offer of assistance to the family.
- It is the hope that by working together, the food service contractor, School District and parents/guardians' negative debts can be resolved in a positive manner. If the negative debt balance is not resolved, the parents/guardians may be requested to meet with School District administration to resolve the matter. If there is no attempt to resolve the negative debt balance and/or seek assistance, the School District may take further action, including legal action.
- All accounts must be settled at the end of the school year. If any account has a negative balance on July 1, the School District may take legal action.

Checks Returned for Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF)

- When a check is returned to the School District for NSF, a notification will be sent to inform the parents/guardians from the District Business Office.
- Payment for the NSF check must be in the form of cash, cashier's check, or money order.
- Payment must be received within ten (10) days of the date of the letter.
- A NSF fee will be incurred and will be included in the notification from the food service contractor. The NSF fee and the amount of the check will be deducted from the student's lunch account upon notice from the bank and the above-mentioned rules will take effect.

Staff Policy/Training

- Annually a copy of this Policy and associated training will be provided to all Food Service and School Staff responsible for serving meals and enforcing this Policy.
- New staff with these responsibilities shall be provided with a written copy of the Policy and associated training during their initial training or orientation.
- In accordance with federal requirements, a record of receipt of the Policy and associated training will be maintained by the Food Service Contractor.

Student with Special Dietary Needs

Nothing in this policy prohibits providing an appropriate meal to a student with special dietary needs such as, but not limited to, diabetes, provided these needs have been documented in a health plan, Section 504, or Individual Education Plan. If the meal is medically required, and the student has a balance owed on the student's meal account or does not have cash to purchase the meal, the necessary dietary needs will be met.

To request meal accommodations for students whose dietary needs qualify them for accommodation under law or to file a school meal program please contact your child's School Nurse.

Non-Discrimination

See Policy #1161, Non-Discrimination Policy Statement (All Individuals); School Board policies are available online through the School District's website or by contacting the Superintendent's Office at (603) 279 – 7947.

Complaints Regarding School Lunch Program

- Complaints regarding the School Lunch Program should be directed to SAU #2 Assistant Superintendent by contacting (603) 279 - 7947
- To file a program complaint of discrimination with the USDA, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:
 1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington,
D.C. 20250-9410;
 2. fax: (202) 690-7442; or
 3. email: program.intake@usda.gov.

Positive Balance at the Time of Departure

Any funds under \$5.00 remaining in a student's account after their departure from the school will be returned to the District, unless otherwise requested within thirty (30) days of the student's departure.

Any funds \$5.00 or over remaining in a student's account after their departure from the school will be reimbursed to the student's parent/guardian (if student is under eighteen) within thirty (30) days.

Legal Reference:

15 USC. § 1692-1695 federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA)

42 USC. 1758(b)(6), Use or disclosure of information

Civil Rights Act of 1964 & 7 C.F.R. Part 15, Subpart A & B

2 C.F.R. §200.426

7 C.F.R §210.09

7 C.F.R §210.10

7 C.F.R §210.15

7 C.F.R. §245.5

USDA SP 46-2016- No later than July 1, 2017, all SFA's operating the Federal school meal program are required to have a written meal charge policy.

USDA Guidance SP37-2016: Meaningful Access for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) in the School Meal Programs

RSA 189:11-a

RSA 358-C, New Hampshire's Unfair, Deceptive or Unreasonable Collection Practices Act; NH Dept. of Education Technical Advisory- Food and Nutrition Programs

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