

POLICY

2018

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Non-Instructional/Business
Operations

SUBJECT: SCHOOL LUNCH AND BREAKFAST MEAL CHARGING

It is the District's goal to provide students with access to nutritious no- or low-cost meals each school day and to ensure that a student whose parent/guardian has unpaid meal charges is not treated differently than a student whose parent/guardian does not have unpaid meal charges.

Unpaid meal charges place a large financial burden on the District. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with federal requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances to ensure that the student is not stigmatized, distressed, or embarrassed.

The provisions of this policy pertain to regular priced reimbursable school breakfast, lunch and snack meals only. Charging of items outside of the reimbursable meals (a la carte items, adult meals, etc.) is expressly prohibited.

Access to Meals

- a) Free meal benefit eligible students will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch meal of their choice each day. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.
- b) Reduced meal benefit eligible students will be allowed to receive a breakfast of their choice for \$0.25 and lunch of their choice for \$0.25 each day. A student will be allowed to charge meals to their account after the balance reaches zero. The charge meals offered to students will be reimbursable meals available to all students, unless the student's parent or guardian has specifically provided written permission to the District to withhold a meal. A la carte items or other similar items may not be purchased until all outstanding account balances have been paid.
- c) Full pay students will pay for meals at the District's published paid meal rate each day. A student will be allowed to charge meals to their account after the balance reaches zero. The charge meals offered to students will be reimbursable meals available to all students, unless the student's parent or guardian has specifically provided written direction to the District to withhold a meal. A la carte items or other similar items may not be purchased until all outstanding account balances have been paid.

Ongoing Staff Training

- a) Staff will be trained annually and throughout the year as needed on the procedures for managing meal charges using the State Education Department (SED) Webinar or the District's training program.
- b) Staff training will include ongoing eligibility certification for free or reduced price meals.

(Continued)

SUBJECT: SCHOOL LUNCH AND BREAKFAST MEAL CHARGING (continued)

Parent Notification

- a) Parents/guardians will be notified that a student has accrued unpaid meal charges within five (5) school days of the charge and then every week thereafter.
- b) Students/Parents/Guardians may receive low balance alerts via myschoolbucks.com.

Parent Outreach

- a) Staff will communicate with parents/guardians with ten or more unpaid meal charges to determine eligibility for free or reduced price meals.
- b) Written communications sent home via the student will be in a standard sealed envelope addressed "To the parent or guardian of:" Such communications will be distributed at the time of day that all other district/parent communications are distributed.
- c) Staff will make two documented attempts to reach out to parents/guardians to complete a meal application in addition to the application and instructions provided in the back to school calendar.
- d) Staff will contact the parent/guardian to offer assistance with completion of meal application to determine if there are other issues within the household causing the student to have insufficient funds, offering any other assistance that is appropriate.

Minimizing Student Distress

- a) Staff will not publicly identify or stigmatize any student in line for a meal or discuss any outstanding meal debt in the presence of any other students unless initiated or requested by the student.
- d) Staff will not take any action directed at a student to collect unpaid meal charges.
- e) Staff will deal directly with parents/guardians regarding unpaid meal charges.

Ongoing Eligibility Certification

- a) Staff will conduct direct certification through the New York Student Identification System (NYSSIS) for all new enrollments and use SED Roster Upload at least three (3) times annually to maximize free eligibility.

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(Continued)

SUBJECT: SCHOOL LUNCH AND BREAKFAST MEAL CHARGING (continued)

- b) Staff will provide parents/guardians with free and reduced price application and instructions at the beginning of each school year in the back to school calendar.
- c) The District will use its administrative prerogative to complete an application on a student's behalf judiciously, and only after using exhaustive efforts to obtain a completed application from the student's parent/guardian. The District will complete the application using only available information on family size and income that falls within approvable guidelines.
- d) The District will coordinate with the foster, homeless, migrant, and runaway coordinators on a regular basis to certify eligible students.

Prepaid Accounts

Students/Parents/Guardians may pay for meals in advance and receive low balance alerts via myschoolbucks.com. Parents may also pay with a check payable to Albion School Lunch Fund. Further details are available on the District's webpage at www.albionk12.org. Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a student may be without meal money on any given day. Any remaining funds for a particular student will be carried over to the next school year.

To obtain a refund for excess balances or a withdrawn or graduating student, a written or e-mailed request for a refund must be submitted to the District Treasurer. Students who are graduating at the end of the year will be given the option to transfer any remaining money to a sibling's account through a written or e-mailed request.

Unclaimed funds must be requested within one school year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the District Food Service Program.

Adoption Date 07/09/18 BOE