

FOOD SERVICES MANAGEMENT: STUDENT MEAL ACCOUNTS

I. Policy

The North Reading Public School District recognizes that a child's nutrition is very important to a successful learning experience. To this end, the Food Services Department will make sound accommodations for students whose meal accounts achieve a negative balance.

Under no circumstance will a student be denied a lunch; the following charging procedures will be implemented.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the school district. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the Food Services Department and, potentially, the general fund. The goals of this policy are:

- To establish a consistent district policy regarding meal charges and collection of meal charges
- To ensure that parents/guardians assume proper responsibility of student meal account payments

III. Scope and Responsibility

The Food Services Department: Responsible for maintaining records and alerting parents/guardians of a negative meal account balance by way of regular email notifications.

The School District: Responsible for supporting the Food Services Department in assisting in the collection of unpaid funds.

The Parents/Guardians: Responsible for maintain positive student meal account balances.

IV: Administration

1. Free Lunch and Reduced Lunch:

A) Students eligible for "Free Lunch" as defined by federal regulations will be eligible to receive a free meal each school day.

B) Student eligible for "Reduced Lunch" as defined by federal regulations will be eligible to receive a reduced price meal each school day. Students will be allowed to charge a maximum of three (3) reduced price meals, which will be known as the "account cap." Reduced lunch status allows the student to receive reduced price meals at an amount determined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. A la carte items of any nature are not part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) program and must be purchased separately.

2. Full Paid Lunch:

A) Students not eligible for "Free Lunch" or "Reduced Lunch" will be allowed to charge up to a maximum of three (3) lunches, which will be known as the "account cap," when their account achieves a negative balance. Such lunches will include menu and a la carte items.

3. Collection Procedures:

A) Notices of deficit balances will be sent to parents/guardians at regular intervals during the school year.

B) When any student's meal account exceeds the "account cap" as defined above he/she will be offered the standard reimbursable lunch being served that day; no a la carte items will be sold to the student until the meal account is paid in full.

C) The lunch served will be charged to the student's lunch account at the applicable lunch rate. Parents/guardians are responsible for payment of these meals to the Food Services Program.

4. Account Balances:

Balances may be checked at any time by logging into <https://www.myschoolbucks.com> system or by emailing the Food Services Director. All meal accounts are expected to be paid in full by the end of the given school year.

Checks returned for Non-sufficient Funds (NSF): when a check is returned to the Town Treasurer's Office for "NSF," a letter will be mailed by the School District's Business Office to inform the parents/guardians. Such letter will additionally note that payment along with any applicable fees must be made within ten (10) business days upon receipt of the letter. When the NSF notice is received, the Food Services Director will deduct the check amount from the student's account.

Unpaid Balances: Unpaid student meal account balances will be identified as a financial obligation of the parents/guardians and remedied in accordance with current practices observed across the school district.

5. Other Matters:

All school cafeterias possess computerized point of sale/cash register systems that maintain a record of all monies paid and deposited for each student. Said record will be made available to the parent upon request. The Food Services Department shall inform parents that meals can be paid in advance to mitigate outstanding balance issues and to assure that their child's account has sufficient funds to minimize the possibility that their child may be without meal money on any given day.

If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the Principal will investigate the situation, including contacting the parents/guardians to bring money to the school and/or encouraging the parent to apply for free or reduced price meals. If the situation continues, the Principal will report it to the Superintendent for further investigation.

A) **Block on Accounts:** a parent may call the Food Services Director to place a block on their child's account to prohibit the purchase of a la carte items or set a dollar cap.

B) Refunds:

(1) Withdrawn Students: For any student who is withdrawn, a written request for a refund of any money remaining in their account must be submitted. An email request is also acceptable.

(2) Graduating Students: Students who are graduating will be provided the applicable refund at the end of the school year. Funds can also be transferred to a sibling's account with a written request.

C) **Unclaimed Funds:** All refunds must be requested within one year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the North Reading Public Schools Food Service Program.

First Reading August 29, 2016

Second Reading September 12, 2016