

LEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS MEAL CHARGE POLICY

- I. PURPOSE/POLICY:** The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the district. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the Food Service Department. The goals of this policy are:
- To establish a consistent district policy regarding charges and collection of charges.
 - To treat all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts.
 - To support positive situations with district staff, district business policies, students and parent/guardian to the maximum extent possible.
 - To establish policies that are age appropriate.
 - To encourage parent/guardian/adult students to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student.

II. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

The Food Service Department: Responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the school district of outstanding balances. The Food Service Department is also responsible for notifying the student's parent/guardian/adult student of low or outstanding balances.

The School District: Responsible for supporting the Food Service Department in collection activities.

The Parent/Guardian/Adult Student: Immediate payment.

III. ADMINISTRATION:

1) Free and Reduced Lunch Students

- a) Free Lunch Status Students will not be allowed to have a negative account balance. Free lunch status allows a child to receive a free meal every day. A la Carte items are not part of the USDA program.
- b) Reduced Lunch Status Students will be allowed to have a negative account balance up to a maximum dollar equivalent of six (6) reduced priced meals which will be known as the "account cap". Reduced lunch status allows a child to receive reduced priced meals at \$0.40.

2) All Other Students:

- a) Elementary students: will be allowed to charge up to a maximum dollar equivalent of three (3) meals which will be known as the "account cap".

- (1) These meals will include anything on the menu;
- (2) Notices of low or deficit balances will be sent to parents/guardians at regular intervals during the school year;
- (3) When the child reaches the "account cap" they will only be offered a designated menu alternate of the Cafeteria Director's choice.
- (4) This designated menu alternate will be charged to the child's lunch account at the standard lunch rate. It will be reported as a meal to the state and federal school lunch authorities and thus will be eligible for reimbursement. Parents/Guardians are responsible for payment of these meals to the food service program; and
- (5) Once the child reaches the maximum meal charge, no a la carte items will be sold to the child *and all transactions may become a cash basis transaction.*

b) Middle school students: will be allowed to charge up to a maximum dollar equivalent of two (2) meals which will be known as the "account cap".

- (1) These meals will include anything on the menu.
- (2) Notices of low or deficit balances will be sent to parents/guardians at regular intervals during the school year.
- (3) When the child reaches the "account cap" they will only be offered a designated menu alternate of Cafeteria Director's choice.
- (4) This designated menu alternate will be charged to the child's lunch account at the standard lunch rate. It will be reported as a meal to the state and federal school lunch authorities and thus will be eligible for reimbursement. Parents/Guardians are responsible for payment of these meals to the food service program.
- (5) Once the child reaches the maximum meal charge, no a la carte items will be sold to the child *and all transactions may become a cash basis transaction.*

c) High school students: will not be allowed to charge any school meals causing their school lunch account to go into a deficit balance

3) **Balances Owed:** This will apply to any account balances above the "account cap" at any time or after May 1, and any payments made by check that are returned to the District by the bank with notice of "insufficient funds." **All accounts must be settled at the end of a school year.** Letters will be sent home approximately 1 week before the last day of school for elementary students whose accounts are low.

- a) **Checks Returned for Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF):** When a check is returned to the Treasurer's Office for "NSF", a letter will be sent to inform the parent(s)/guardian/adult student from the Superintendent's Office. Currently, there is a \$25.00 penalty fee that is charged by the bank to the Town for a NSF check. The penalty fee and the amount of the check will be deducted from the child/children's lunch account immediately upon notice from the bank. Payment

a) **Blocks on Accounts:** A parent may call the Food Service Director to place a block on their child's account to prohibit the purchase of a la carte items or set dollar cap. The Superintendent's Office may instruct the Food Service director to place a block on a student's account due to non-payment of district fees or other collection issues.

b) **Refunds**

i) Withdrawn Students: For any student who is withdrawn, a written request for a refund of any money remaining in their account must be submitted.

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

c) Unclaimed Funds: All refunds must be requested within 6 months. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the Lee Public School Food Service Program.

NOTE: All funds are deposited into a bank account controlled by the Town of Lee Treasurer

Legal Reference: 7 CFR 210, Office of Management and Budget Circular A-87

Chapter 71: Section 72. Sale of lunches

Chapter 71: Section 68. Duties of towns to maintain schools; transportation of children; school building committee representation

Chapter 71: Section 37K. Business demonstration projects; disposition of proceeds

Chapter 44: Section 69. Municipal or district services, fees or charges; insufficient funds checks; penalty

Chapter 60: Section 57A. Payment by check not duly paid; penalty

Chapter 93: Section 40A. Dishonored checks; demand for payment