

STUDENTS

SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM AND MEAL CHARGE POLICY

I. Statement of Policy

- A. The District participates in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) and to operate the District's program within the requirements of the federal and state regulations and guidelines applicable to the programs.
- B. To extend the benefit of the program to all eligible students, the District will communicate to families the eligibility for free and reduced meals, the procedures for applying and the district's policies and procedures regarding meal charges set forth in this Policy.
- C. The District's food service program shall be managed so that the nonprofit school food service account does not operate at a deficit, and so that subsidies from the general fund are limited.

II. Eligibility for Free and Reduced Meals

- A. At the beginning of each year, information letters shall be sent to households of children attending the school to inform families about the Child Nutrition Programs and that free or reduced price meals or free milk may be available to children.
- B. The letters may be distributed by the mail, e-mailed to the parent or guardian, or included in information packets provided to students.
- C. A household may apply for benefits at any time during the school year.
- D. Only one application is required for all children in the household.
- E. No application is necessary if the household was notified by the District that all children have been directly certified. If the household is not sure if their children have been directly certified, they should contact Tom Pfisterer (School Lunch Director)

III. Meal Payments and Deferred Payments (Meal Charge)

- A. Students may charge meals in accordance with the following rules:
 - 1. Students will pay for meals at the school's published meal rate each day. Families are expected to maintain funds in accounts to minimize the possibility that a child may be without meal money on any given day. If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the administration will

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investigate the situation and take further action as needed. If financial hardship exists, parents/guardians will be encouraged to apply for free or reduced price lunches.

2. Students may charge complete meals only.
 3. All students will be provided with meal charge opportunities pursuant to this policy, regardless of whether they receive full price, reduced price, or free meals.
 4. A student will be allowed to charge a maximum of five (5) meals to their account after the balance on their meal card or MySchoolBucks is exhausted. The charge meals offered to students during this grace period will be reimbursable meals that are available to all students (or allergy specific alternate).
 5. A student with an unpaid balance for more than five (5) meals will receive a reimbursable alternate meal (or allergy specific alternate) until their account balance has been paid in full.
 6. No student with a negative meal card or MySchoolBucks account balance will be allowed to purchase any a la carte items, including snacks, extras, or drinks other than milk.
- B. The District is committed to ensuring that federal reimbursements, children's payments and other non-designated nonprofit food service revenues do not subsidize meals for adults. The District therefore adheres to a "no charge" meal purchase policy for adults.

IV. Communication of Policy to Families, Students, and Staff

- A. The District will communicate this policy to parents/guardians in writing at the start of each school year and upon enrollment during the school year through the student handbook, newsletter, letter, and website.
- B. The District will provide this policy to all school staff responsible for enforcement, including but not limited to, school food service professionals for collecting payment for meals at the point of service, staff involved in notifying families of low or negative balances, school social workers, school nurses, the homeless liaison, other staff members assisting children in need (or who may be contacted by families with unpaid meal charges), and any staff involved in enforcing any other aspects of this policy.

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V. Nonprofit School Food Service Account (NSFSA)

- A. Meal charges that remain unpaid after the equivalence of five (5) meal charges are classified as delinquent debt. The District will make reasonable efforts to collect delinquent debt. The cost of the District's collection efforts may be charged to the NSFSA.
 - 1. When a student's unpaid meal charges exceed the equivalence of five (5) meal charges, Donna Peckham (School Lunch Site Director) will send a letter to the student's parent(s) or person in parental relations explaining the amount of the delinquent debt and describing options available for bringing the student's meal account current. A copy of this Policy shall be sent with the letter.

- B. Delinquent debt shall be classified as bad debt as of July 31 providing there have been no efforts to reduce the delinquent debt, or at any earlier time that the Superintendent of Schools determines that efforts to collect the delinquent debt would be useless or too costly.
 - 1. Bad debt may not be recovered from or charged against the NSFSA and will be covered by non-Federal funds.
 - 2. Records of the meal charges classified as bad debt and of the accounting used to cover the bad debt, sufficient to establish that NSFSA funds were not used, shall be kept and retained in accordance with federal record retention requirements.

Sauquoit Valley Central School District

Legal Ref: 7 CFR 210.12 and 245.5; 42 USC 1758(b)(2)(A); May 2006 Memo from SED's Frances N. O'Donnell to Food Service Directors/Managers; August 2005 Memo from SED titled "*Establishing A Meal Charge Policy.*" July 8, 2016 Memo from SED titled "*Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments.*"

Adopted: 10/24/17