



# Spencer-East Brookfield Regional School District

## Office of the Superintendent

306 Main Street, Spencer, Massachusetts 01562  
Telephone (508) 885-8500 \* Fax (508) 885-8504

**Paul S. Haughey, Ed.D.**  
**Superintendent of Schools**

## Spencer East Brookfield Regional School District's Meal Charging Procedure

The Spencer East Brookfield Regional School District (SEBRSD) Food Service and Nutrition Program takes pride in serving nutritious meals daily to our students. We are firm believers that hungry students cannot learn and are committed to ensuring this never happens. This responsibility comes with a financial burden, one that our department must keep strict control over. The SEBRSD's Food Service & Nutrition Program is a self-sustaining program, which relies on funds received from the NSLP and SBP in return for selling reimbursable meals. In order to continue providing nutritious, high quality meals to our students, we must follow strict policies and procedures to ensure financial stability.

According to The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) "the School Food Service Authorities (SFA's) must be made whole for any outstanding debt remaining at the end of each school year". In order to minimize the impact of outstanding debt (due to meal charges) on the district, the following procedures will be implemented with the goal of maintaining the financial stability of the program.

### **Payment Options:**

All students are expected to pay for their meals, in full, at the time of sale. Preferably, meals will be pre-paid in advance by cash, check or credit/debit through our online prepayment program, MySchoolBucks.com. Balances and transactions may be checked at any time by logging into the MySchoolBucks.com online prepayment system.

### **Meal Charging Procedures:**

#### **1) Students Receiving Free/Reduced Price Meal Benefits**

- a) Students eligible to receive free meals are entitled to one reimbursable breakfast and one reimbursable lunch daily, free of charge. Any a la carte items such as snacks, single milks, ice cream, 'extra' servings, etc. are not part of the USDA program and will be charged accordingly. Free lunch students will not be allowed to have a negative balance and will be denied a la carte items if no funds are available to cover the purchase.
- b) Students eligible to receive reduced price meals will be allowed to charge up to a maximum dollar equivalent of 5 reduced price meals, known as a "charge cap". Reduced eligibility allows a student to receive a complete breakfast for \$0.30 and a complete lunch for \$0.40. Any a la carte items such as snacks, single milks, ice cream, 'extra' servings, etc. are not part of the USDA program and will be charged accordingly.



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### 2) **All Other Students**

All students will be denied a la carte items if they have a negative balance regardless of grade level and/or meal eligibility status.

When a student reaches the maximum charge cap, an “alternative meal”, which meets state and federal nutrition guidelines will be offered. This meal may consist of a cheese sandwich, a milk and a serving of fruit/vegetable. These meals will be charged to the student’s account at the regular lunch price, will be offered until debt is reconciled and will be reported as a reimbursable meal to the state and federal lunch authorities.

#### **East Brookfield Elementary & Wire Village Students**

Students enrolled at either of these schools will be allowed to charge up to a maximum dollar equivalent of 5 meals, known as a “charge cap”, before they are offered an alternative meal. The building principal will be notified of students who have reached this ‘charge cap’ prior to their first alternative meal. The student’s account will be charged the regular lunch price for this meal and will continue to receive this meal until debt is reconciled.

#### **Knox Trail Middle School**

Students enrolled at this school will be allowed to charge up to a maximum dollar equivalent of 3 meals, known as a “charge cap”, before they are offered an alternative meal. The student’s account will be charged the regular lunch price for this meal and will continue to receive this meal until debt is reconciled.

#### **David Prouty High School**

Students enrolled at this school will be allowed to charge up to 1 meal, known as a “charge cap”, before they are offered an alternative meal. The student’s account will be charged the regular lunch price for this meal and will continue to receive this meal until debt is reconciled.

### 3) **Balances Owed**

- a) Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be notified weekly via an automated email if their student’s account is delinquent.
- b) A list of students who owe more than \$15 will be provided to building principal at the start of each school week for students in grades preK-8.
- c) A list of students who owe more than \$30 will be provided to the District Comptroller on a regular basis
- d) All accounts must be reconciled by the end of the school year. Letters will be sent home with students during the last two weeks of school noting any negative balances.
- e) All graduating seniors must reconcile their accounts prior to graduation in order to participate in graduation ceremonies and/or receive their cap and gown.
- f) District Comptroller will be notified of any outstanding debts as of June 30<sup>th</sup> each year



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- g) All teachers, staff and administration are expected to pay for all food purchases at the time of sale.

#### 4) **Balances Owed with No Response from Parent/Guardian**

If payments have not been received and there has been no contact from the parent/guardian, the District Comptroller or designee may take one or more of the following actions;

- a) Prohibit student participation in any future fee based program until outstanding balances are resolved
- b) Prohibit student participation in senior activities and/or graduation exercises
- c) Referral to small claims court, collection agency and/or District Attorney's office.

#### 5) **Account Refunds**

- a) **Withdrawn Students:** Students who are withdrawing from the district, may request a refund of any money remaining in their account via a written request/email to the Food Service Director from their parent/guardian. Requests must be made within 6 months of the student's withdrawal date. After the 6 month period, any money remaining will become the property of the SEBRSD Food Service and Nutrition Program.
- b) **Graduating Students:** Students who are graduating may request a refund of any money remaining in their account via a written request/email to the Food Service Director from their parent/guardian. Funds may also be transferred to a sibling's account, within the same district, by notifying the Food Service Director.
- c) **Transferring Funds:** Funds can easily be transferred between siblings within the same school district. To request a transfer, please contact the Food Service Director via email or phone.

#### 6) **Unclaimed Funds**

All refunds must be requested within one school year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the SEBRSD Food Service and Nutrition Program and will be placed into a "secret lair" fund to be used at the discretion of the Food Service Director & District Comptroller for those families facing severe financial difficulties.