

File: EFCA – STUDENT MEAL ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT POLICY

I. PURPOSE/POLICY:

The Walpole School Nutrition Department takes pride in providing nutritious meals daily to our students. Research has shown that students who are hungry have a difficult time concentrating and do not perform as well as their peers. The Walpole School Nutrition Program strives to be self-funded and must operate in a financially responsible manner. The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the District.

The goals of this policy are:

- To establish procedures for meal charges and collections.
- To treat all students with compassion, sensitivity and dignity regardless of account balances.
- To establish policies that are age appropriate.
- To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments and
- To promote self-responsibility of the student.

II. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

The School Nutrition Office: Responsible for maintaining meal charge records and notifying the School District of outstanding balances. The School Nutrition Office is also responsible for notifying the student’s parent/guardian of low or outstanding balances.

The School District: Responsible for supporting the School Nutrition Office in collection activities.

The Parent/Guardian: Responsible for maintaining a positive balance in their children’s meal accounts.

III. MEAL CHARGES

Elementary School Charge Policy:

- All students wishing to purchase a meal will enter their PIN number and the system will charge them accordingly based on meal eligibility.
- When fund balances are negative:
- Only the reimbursable meals offered for that day are available as a charge.
- Students will NOT be allowed to charge ala carte items.
- Students who are unable to pay for a meal should be provided with a meal from home.

- Elementary students who do not bring funds to purchase their lunch or a meal from home will be provided with a lunch regardless of their balance, and their accounts will be debited.

Middle and High Schools Charge Policy:

- All students will enter their PIN number and the system will charge them accordingly based on meal eligibility.
- Students are allowed to charge their school meal up to a maximum of negative \$15.00 with the following restrictions:
 - Only the reimbursable meals offered for that day are available as a charge.
 - Students will NOT be allowed to charge ala carte items.
- Once the negative \$15.00 threshold is reached, students will not be allowed to charge any additional meals until the balance is paid. (At the discretion of the school Principal).

District Low and Negative Balance Notification Procedures:

- We highly recommend that all students be registered at www.myschoolbucks.com to receive free email updates for account balances. The email notification is a FREE service and is the best method for receiving current information regarding account balances and purchases.* Low Balance email notifications are sent once a student's account reaches \$6.00 in order to maintain the necessary positive balance in the child's account.
- Parents or guardians of students with accounts in arrears will be notified via email and/or U.S. mail. This mailing will include information on the Free and Reduced Meal application.
- If the negative balance remains unpaid or continues to grow, further actions may be taken and are detailed in the list below.
 - Call from the School Nutrition Office
 - Call from the Building Principal
 - A certified negative balance letter mailed to the residence
 - School Resource Officer visits house to address potential neglect
 - Account placed in collections by the Business Office
 - All District-wide, fee-based services denied until the balance is paid.
- A record of all correspondence will be kept on file to document that the above procedures have been followed.

IV. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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) from the Treasurer's Office. Payment for the NSF check must be in the form of cash, cashier's check, or money order. Payment must be received within ten (10) days of the date of the letter. Any penalty fee will be made payable to the Town of Walpole and sent to the Treasurer's Office along with the replacement payment. The amount of the check will be deducted from the

student's lunch account immediately upon notice from the bank, and the above mentioned rules will take effect. Second requests will follow M.G.L. Chapter 93 § 40A.

Blocks on Meal Accounts: A parent may call the School Nutrition Office to place a block on their child's account for any of the following reasons: to prohibit or restrict the purchase of meals, second meals and or ala carte items, or to set a specific dollar cap. The School Business Manager may instruct the School Nutrition Office to place a block on a student's account due to non-payment of District fees or other collection issues.

Refunds:

Withdrawn Students: For any student who is withdrawn, a written request for a refund of any funds remaining in their account must be submitted. An e-mail request is also acceptable. Requests should be sent to the School Nutrition Office.

Graduating Seniors Meal Accounts: Seniors must pay all meal charges before receiving their cap and gown. All parents/guardians of seniors will receive a notice in May of remaining money in their meal accounts. They will receive a letter to elect to move money into a sibling's lunch account, request a refund, or elect to donate the funds to the "Needy Student Account Fund." All refund requests should be sent to the School Nutrition Office to be processed for payment.

Free or Reduced Priced Meals

Your child may be eligible to receive free or reduced priced breakfast and lunch meals through the School Nutrition Program. To determine if your child qualifies you will need to complete an application and submit it to the School Nutrition Office located at Elm Street School.

This application is available to print from the School Nutrition webpage and directly from our menu page and will also be sent home with each student during the first week of school. If you need an application in another language, call the School Nutrition Office at 774-315-5642 or visit www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/family-friendly-application-translations.