



**West Bridgewater School Committee  
West Bridgewater, Massachusetts**

**Policy Manual**

**WBSC No. 8000                      Pages**

**Referenced Material**

**Food Service Policy**

*The West Bridgewater Schools do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, sex, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, homelessness or disability*

## **West Bridgewater Public Schools Meal Charge Policy-Draft**

### **Purpose:**

The West Bridgewater Public School District provides nutrition and well-balanced meals to students. By statute, the district's Food Service Department is a self-supporting fund that cannot have a negative balance at the close of the fiscal year. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the Food Service Department and eventually on the district's operating budget. The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal charge procedures throughout the district. The goals of this policy are:

- To establish a consistent district policy regarding the method of payment for meals, charge availability, and collection methods for charges in the district's meal program.
- To treat all students with dignity at all times.
- To support positive interactions with district staff, students, and parent(s)/guardian(s).
- To protect confidentiality.
- To encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to assume the responsibility of payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student.

### **Scope of Responsibility:**

- The Food Service Department: Responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the student's parent/guardian and school district (Principals, Business Manager) of outstanding balances.
- The School District- Responsible for supporting and assisting the Food Service Director and site designees in the collection process.
- Parent(s)/Guardians(s): Immediate correspondence and full payment of outstanding balances.

### **Policy:**

**Student Accounts-** Any student whose school meal account has a zero or negative balance will be allowed to charge a reimbursable meal. Charging a reimbursable meal will result in a negative balance on the student's account until funds are added to the student's account.

Under no circumstances will a student with a zero or negative balance be allowed to purchase a la carte items (extra items not included in the reimbursable meal) until the student's account is in good standing.

### **Communication of Student Accounts to Students ,Parent(s)/Guardian(s), and School Administration-**

- School Nutrition Staff will alert students of low balances and negative balances during transactions as appropriate, depending on the student's age.
- Twice a week, negative balance emails alerts will be sent to parents. These emails are generated from the School Nutrition Department's point of sale (POS) system.
- Twice a month, the Food Service Director will prepare negative balance letters for all accounts with negative balances greater than \$5.00. These letters will be sent signed by the school

principal and sent home with elementary students or mailed for middle and high school students.

- All written communication includes information on applying for Free or Reduced Meal Benefits and registering for the electronic online prepayment system.
- For negative accounts in excess of \$50.00, the Business Manager will be notified. If the parent(s)/guardian(s) has not made any payments in an effort to reduce the negative balance or fails to bring the student's account in good standing within thirty days, the administration may:
  - Refer the account to a collection agency.
  - Initiate a claim in the court system
  - Notify other appropriate state agencies
  - Prohibit participation by the student in future fee-based programs until balance is paid.

### **Payments:**

West Bridgewater Public Schools will accept pre-payments of school meals in the form of cash or check brought into school or via the school meal online payment system. Cash will also be accepted at the registers.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be encouraged to register for a free account on the school meal online payment program, mySchoolBucks.com, which allows parent(s)/guardians to:

- View student transaction history
- Request e-mail alerts for low balances
- Make payments (automatic or one-time) to a student's account

### **Refunds:**

Account balances carry from year to year. Any positive balances remain on the account to be used in the following school year. Funds can be transferred between siblings anytime with a request from the parent/guardian.

- Graduating Students: Funds may be transferred to a sibling's account where applicable or the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be issued a refund check.
- Withdrawn students: Funds may be transferred to a sibling's account where applicable. A request for a refund of any funds remaining in the student's account must be submitted in writing/email.
- After one (1) year, unclaimed funds will become the property of the West Bridgewater Public Schools, Food Service Department.