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**BEAR VALLEY SCHOOLS**

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North Shore
Elementary
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Elementary
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Big Bear Middle
Big Bear High
Chautauqua High

Child Nutrition Services

P.O. Box 1529 * 40940 Pennsylvania Ave * Big Bear Lake, CA 92315 * (909) 866-4406 * Fax (909) 866-2040 * www.bearvalleyfs.com

To: Parents, Guardians, and School District Staff

From: Rita Acevedo, Food Service Supervisor

Date: October 21, 2019

Subject: Written Policy for Unpaid Meal Charges, Notification of Delinquent Meal Payments, and Excess Student Account Balances

Purpose: Written Policy, Beneficial Information

Source: **Senate Bill No. 265** Board Policy AR 3551 Food Service Operations, California *Education Code*, sections 49550, 49552, 49553, and 49557; Title 2, *Code of Federal Regulations*, Section 200.426; Title 7, *Code of Federal Regulations*, sections 210.9, 210.10, 210.15; U.S Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service Policy Memoranda; SP 16-2016

Bear Valley Unified School District is challenged with overcoming student's unpaid meal charges. Each school day the Child Nutrition Department provides access to healthy school meals to all students who select a meal from the school cafeteria regardless of sufficient funds to pay. This written policy is designed to inform parents, guardians, and school district staff of our commitment to provide healthy school meals, minimize identification of children with insufficient funds to pay for school meals, and maintain the financial integrity of the nonprofit school food service account.

Meal Cost and Payment Options for School Meals

Full paid breakfast meals are \$1.80; elementary lunch is \$2.85 and \$3.30 for middle and high school. All students that are eligible for Reduced-Priced meals will receive both breakfast and lunch at NO CHARGE. All students have the option to pay for their meal at the time of meal selection. Households can bring in or send a check/cash with your child to the cafeteria payable to "Child Nutrition" cash receipts are available. We accept online payments at www.bearvalleyfs.com. Prepayments are accepted and highly encouraged to ensure students do not accrue unpaid meal charges. Automatic replenish payments are also available online; parents/guardians can set this up at www.bearvalleyfs.com and select payment options. Please call Child Nutrition at 909-866-4406 if you need assistance. Cash and checks are accepted at the Child Nutrition Department or at the Bear Valley Unified School District office at any time during the school year or during school breaks and summer months.

Notification of Low Balance or Unpaid Meal Balance

Parents/guardians shall be notified whenever a student's account has an unpaid balance of \$50 or more. Parents/guardians shall be notified in writing that full payment is due within seven school days from the date of the notice. Low balances alerts are available via email, please visit www.bearvalleyfs.com and select payment options, you will need to enable low balance alerts and set a low balance alert amount that works for your family. Action must be taken by parents or guardians if they would like to use this alert system. Please call us at 909-866-4406 for assistance with this set up. The Child Nutrition Department will provide a monthly notification letter of a low and unpaid meal balance (student's that owe more than \$50.00 or have less than \$10.00 available for meals) these letters are generated and sent home with students. All notification letters are enclosed and addressed to parents or guardians of the student. **IMPORTANT: Students with a unpaid meal balance may continue to select and receive meals from the school cafeteria regardless of the ability to pay or regardless of amount owed for unpaid meals.**

We DO NOT provide an alternative meal or take away a selected meal from a student. Students with unpaid meal balance or insufficient funds will be provided a meal of their choice and their unpaid meal balance will increase. Students with unpaid meal balances will not be shamed or treated differently from other students. Students are not required to select a meal from the school cafeteria. Households may provide meals from home. The Child Nutrition Department will provide monthly call outs, via our school messenger and email notification to all households when a student (s) has an unpaid meal balances of \$50.00 or more

Notification to Pay Delinquent Debt

All unpaid meal charges that were incurred less than 90 days prior to June 30 are considered delinquent debt. The Child Nutrition Department will make all reasonable attempts to collect delinquent debt. We will do our best not to negatively impact or single out the children involved, and instead focus primarily on adults in the household responsible for providing funds for meals at school. Within 90 days of the start of a new school year, households will have an opportunity to pay the delinquent debt in full or make payment arrangements. Please call the Child Nutrition Department at 909-866-4406 to set up a payment plan.

Bad debt for unpaid meals

When households decline or are unable to pay delinquent debt, school officials must reclassify delinquent debt as "bad debt." Once a delinquent debt is reclassified as a bad debt, it must be written off as an operating loss. The Child Nutrition Department does not have authority to write off bad debt. Instead, these losses must be restored using non-Federal funds within 30 days.

Eligible Households that Have Not Applied for Free or Reduced- Priced Meals

In cases of repeated nonpayment by a student, the Superintendent or designee may contact parents/guardians to discuss the reasons for the nonpayment. The Superintendent or designee may evaluate individual circumstances to determine if the student's parents/guardians need assistance completing an application for free or reduced-price meals or need referral to social services. School officials may complete an application for a child known to be eligible for meal benefits if the household has not applied. When exercising this option, the school official must complete an application on behalf of the child based on the household size and income information to the best of their ability. Households will be notified if their child has been certified to receive free or reduced priced meals at school. This option is intended for limited use and when school officials have knowledge of a child in need of meals.

Student Account with Excess Balances

All funds that are prepaid to a student's account and not utilized will be carried over into the next school year. Student's that leave the district or graduate can request a refund. Contact the Child Nutrition Department at 909-866-4406 or visit www.Bearvalleyfs.com to download a refund request form.

How to apply for Free or Reduced- Priced Meals:

Meal applications are available in English and Spanish at your child's school office, Child Nutrition Department located at: 40940 Pennsylvania Ave, Big Bear Lake, CA 92315 and at Bear Valley Unified School District, located at 42271 Moonridge Road, Big Bear Lake, CA 92315. Households may also apply for Free or Reduced-Priced meals online at www.lunchapplication.com or download a meal application from our district's web page, visit www.Bearvalleyusd.org. Meal applications are accepted anytime during the school year, so if your income goes down or your family size increases you may reapply to increase meal benefits. All completed paper applications can be returned for processing to the Child Nutrition Department, your child's school office or the Bear Valley Unified School District. You will receive notification of eligibility. Please call the Child Nutrition Office after 10 days if you have not received notification of eligibility.

Non Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.