

## ALLEN PARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### MEAL CHARGING POLICY

The purpose of having a meal charging policy is to establish consistent clear meal account procedures throughout the district. There is a fine line between considering the fiscal integrity of the district and the solvency of the food service program while also meeting the nutritional needs of students.

#### GOALS:

- To ensure that students have a healthy meal and that no child goes hungry.
- To treat all students with dignity and confidentiality in the serving line.
- To foster clear positive communication among staff, administrators, teachers, students and parent/guardian.
- To establish fair practices that can be used consistently throughout the district regarding meal charges and the collection of charges.
- To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of their child/student.

#### SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

**The Food Service Department:** Responsible for maintaining meal account records, providing notes to be sent home for parents/guardians regarding low balances or meal charges and notifying school administration of potential problems and/or repeat offenders.

**The School:** Responsible for notifying the student's parent/guardian via cashier/office/teacher with phone calls and/or written documentation after credit limit has been reached. The School is responsible for working with the food services office and the households toward a reasonable resolution for payment.

**The Parent/Guardian:** Responsible for immediate payment.

#### MEAL ACCOUNTS:

We strongly discourage meal charges, but understand that an occasional emergency or forgetfulness may make it necessary. Meal charges are a temporary solution and are not intended to address broader issues of a parent/guardian's inability to pay for a meal for his/her child. In those instances, an Application for Free or Reduced Meal Benefits should be completed.

As a matter of practice, parents/guardians are encouraged to make meal payments in advance. Personal checks and cash deposits are accepted daily at the register. Payments can be made for one day, one week, several weeks or even months in advance. The District uses a computerized meal debit system to account for student meals and ala carte sales. Parents/guardians may view their student's lunch account at any time in MyPaymentsPlus. All students have personal accounts regardless of paying status (free, reduced or full pay). Similar to a bank account, each student has a school ID number which stays with them for their duration in the Allen Park Public Schools. For convenience, deposits may also be made by credit/debit card through the MyPaymentsPlus Website for a small fee.

Lunchroom cashiers will verbally notify students at the register when their meal account is low, specifically when it reaches the value of two equivalent lunches or less. In the elementary schools, a friendly note will be sent home.

When accounts remain unpaid, a personal phone call will be made from the food service office. If the account remains unpaid, a letter will be mailed home from the food service office. When using our online payment system, parents/guardians can access account balances at the same time and select to receive a low balance email alert, and make payments for a small fee.

#### **MEAL CHARGING POLICY:**

*Although not required by law through the National School Lunch Act or the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act, limited meal charging will be allowed, as a courtesy to families, under the following conditions:*

#### **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS:**

- Only reimbursable meals may be charged. No ala carte purchases.
- Students may charge any combination of meals (breakfast and lunch) up to a value of \$10.00.
- A balance slip will be sent home weekly with any student having a negative balance.
- Upon the third charged meal, the food service secretary, building cashier or the School Office will place a call to the Parent/Guardian.
- Cashiers will send a list of the students who have a negative account balance to the food service secretary to make a personal phone call home.
- Repayment within three school days is expected for all charged meals and/or meal supplements.
- If a parent signs up to view balances in MyPaymentsPlus they will receive a meal account low balance email.
- If the balance remains unpaid, a letter will be sent home from the food service office.
- Applications for Free and Reduced Priced School Meals will be available in the main office, the food service office and online.
- After the balance reaches -\$10.00, students will be provided with a meal supplement (depending on grade level- salad bar meal and milk or PB&J Sandwich, fruit and milk for lunch and fruit, 2 graham cracker packets and milk for breakfast) to be repaid at the determined price.
- After five meal supplements are provided, school administration will work with the parent/guardian using all reasonable means to obtain repayment and/or obtain a completed Free or Reduced Meal Application.
- If no resolution occurs, school administration or Social Worker may complete an application for a child known to be eligible for Free/Reduced Meal Benefits if the household fails to apply. For those where financial need is not able to be determined, the school administration may notify Children's Protective Services.
- School districts are not obligated by law to provide full-price paying students with a meal.
- Students are not permitted to purchase ala carte items if they owe any unpaid charges.
- No charging will be permitted 2 weeks prior to the end of the school year.
- All unpaid charges will be added to the list of any outstanding fees or unpaid fines at the end of the school year.

#### **MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS:**

- Only reimbursable meals may be charged. No ala carte purchases.
- Students may charge any combination of meals (breakfast and lunch) up to a value of \$9.00.
- Students will be notified verbally at the register when their balance is low, specifically the dollar value of two lunches or lower and/or when they are in arrears.
- Cashiers will send a list of students who have a negative account balance to the food service secretary to make a personal phone call home.

- Payment is expected for all charged meals and meal supplements.
- School administration will be notified after the third occurrence, if payment has not been received.
- A written notification will be sent home after the third occurrence with a Free/Reduced Meal Application.
- Repayment within three school days is expected for all charged meals and meal supplements.
- If a parent signs up to view balances in MyPaymentsPlus they will receive a meal account low balance email.
- If the balance remains unpaid, a letter will be sent home from the food service office.
- Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals will be available in the main office, the food service office, in the cafeteria, and online.
- Up to five (5) Meal Supplements may be provided and must be repaid at the determined price.
- Ala carte items cannot be charged and students are not permitted to purchase ala carte items if they owe any unpaid charges.
- After five meal supplements are provided, school administration will call and work with the parent/guardian using all reasonable means to obtain repayment or obtain a completed Free or Reduced Meal Application.
- If no resolution occurs, school administration or Social Worker may complete an application for a child known to be eligible for Free/Reduced Meal Benefits if the household fails to apply. For those where financial need is not able to be determined, the school administration may notify Children's Protective Services.
- No charging will be permitted 2 weeks prior to the end of the school year.
- All unpaid charges will be added to the list of any outstanding fees or unpaid fines at the end of the school year.

#### **HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS:**

- There is no charging permitted.
- Students will be notified verbally at the register when their balance is low, specifically the dollar value of two lunches or lower.
- Cashiers will send a list of students who have a negative account balance to the food service secretary to make a personal phone call home.
- Up to five meal supplements are provided and must be repaid at the determined price.
- If a parent signs up to view balances in MyPaymentsPlus they will receive a meal account low balance email.
- If the balance remains unpaid, a letter will be sent home from the food service office.
- Applications for Free and Reduced Price School Meals will be available in the main office, in the food service office, in the cafeteria and online.
- Students are not permitted to purchase ala carte items if they are receiving meal supplements.
- School administration or Social Worker may complete an application for a child known to be eligible for Free/Reduced Meal Benefits if the household fails to apply. For those where financial need is not able to be determined, the school administration may notify Children's Protective Services.
- No charging will be permitted 2 weeks prior to the end of the school year.
- All unpaid charges will be added to the list of any outstanding fees or unpaid fines at the end of the school year.

Meal charges will be carried over until December 31<sup>st</sup> of the following school year. At which time the uncollectable meal charges of graduated or inactive students becomes Bad Debt. Bad Debt must be removed from the School Meals Program System. Once classified as bad debt, non-Federal funding sources must reimburse the NSFS for the total amount of the bad debt. Please see the District's Bad Debt policy for further information on Bad Debt.

## **ALLEN PARK PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

### **BAD DEBT POLICY**

Bad debt is uncollectable/delinquent debt that has been determined to be uncollectable by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the following school year in which the debt was incurred. If the uncollectable/delinquent debt cannot be recovered by that time, then this is classified as bad debt. Once classified as bad debt, non-Federal funding sources must reimburse the NSFSA for the total amount of the bad debt. The funds may come from the district general fund, state or local funding, school or community organizations such as the PTA, or any other non-federal source. Once the uncollectable/delinquent debt charges are converted to bad debt, records relating to those charges must be maintained in accordance with the record retention requirements in 7 CFR 210.9(b) (17) and 7 CFR 210.15(b).

Uncollectable debt should be charged to the SFA's general fund or other non-Federal source. The funds may come from the district's general fund, State or local funding, school or community organizations such as the PTA, or any other non-Federal source.

All accounting entries (transfers) should be well documented.