

Reagan Academy Child Nutrition Program Charges Policy

Purpose and Background

(1) National School Lunch, Breakfast, Special (Kindergarten) Milk and the After School Snack Program are federal programs in which this school participates. Pricing policies for school meals are determined at the local level, including decisions about whether or not to extend credit to parents who do not have meal money in their students' accounts or whether or not to provide alternate meals to such students.

(2) Reagan Academy receives partial reimbursement for meals served to students who do not qualify for free meals. Parents must make payments to a student's account to make up the difference between the federal reimbursement and the cost of the meal. This policy applies only to school meal payments, not a la carte sales.

(3) If students qualify for free or reduced-price school lunch, their meals are reimbursed in whole or in part with federal funds. Otherwise, the meal reimbursement is minimal and parents are expected to pay for their student(s') meals.

(4) The purpose of this policy is to explain how Reagan Academy will notify parents/guardians about: money owed for student meals; of the school's procedures for providing meals if students' accounts are delinquent; and to assure and remind parents and school employees that students will never be confronted or embarrassed about money owed for school meals.

Policy Components

Parents shall receive the following information from the us:

- notices about school meals;
- notices stating the prices for the meals;
- informing parents how their students qualify for reduced-price or free meals;
- informing parents how they may provide payment for meals;
- informing parents of the policy for delinquent accounts.

Reagan Academy will send reminders of the policy throughout the school year. We may send letters home, send school newsletter reminders, make announcements, make phone calls or use other reasonable and effective means of communication to contact parents.

Reagan Academy will provide applications for free/reduced-price meals to parents. The school shall also provide the school's designated meal prices. Accompanying the information about the prices of school

meals, parents will receive an application for free and reduced-price meals. The application is available in a variety of languages at:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/family-friendly-application-translations>

The school will provide paper applications for parents who do not have access to on-line forms.

If the student's family receives benefits from the Special Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Family Employment Program (FEP) or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), the household qualifies for meals at no charge, once the school receives notice of student's or family's eligibility, and does not have to complete or submit a free/reduced-price form. Reagan Academy will send the household an e-mail/letter informing parents of a student's eligibility for free meals. If a parent or family qualifies under one of these programs and has not received such a letter before school starts, the parent should contact the school food service.

Payments and Meal Verification

- (1) Reagan Academy must verify at some point in each student's meal service, that the meal is reimbursable or non-reimbursable.
- (2) We will credit meal payments from parents to the student's account within 24 hours. This assures all funds are accurately applied to meal accounts as soon as possible before students are selecting school meals.
- (3) If a student/family qualifies for free meals, no payments are due.
- (4) If a family qualifies for reduced-price meals, the school will charge no more than \$.40 for lunch.
- (5) Parent payment options for student meals may include:
 - (a) Parents may use an automated payment system, if available, to make payments for students' meals. Parents may make on-line payments, using debit or credit cards, for one or all of their students, allocating the funds to individual students' accounts. There are additional fees for the use of a credit card.
 - (b) Parents may make payments to the school by mail or hand delivery. Payments should clearly indicate the account to which the funds should be credited (student's name and amount, if several students attend the school). Reagan Academy accepts checks and/or cash at the school, and credit and/or debt at myschoolbucks.com (Parents should note the school policy for checks returned to the school for insufficient funds.)

Identification of Delinquent Accounts

(1) Reagan Academy will identify family or student accounts that do not have adequate balances to pay for student meals. We will identify these accounts weekly and notify parents by the automatic email system. We will contact parents, as parents have directed, on the automated meal payment system, or by phone, text or e-mail, to allow parents to indicate how they wish to make payments. We may ask students to take notifications addressed to the parent home with them; however, the school will not tell students to “remind” their parents to send money to the school. It is the parent’s responsibility to pay the student’s account. Asking students to remind parents is inappropriate.

(3) The school may use any of the following options (or other reasonable options) for student meals if a student’s meal account is inadequate:

(a) Student may bring a sack meal from home.

(b) Schools may continue to provide reduced meals to students and notify parents that the school will use collection efforts to pay for meals. Schools shall maintain documentation of parent notice.

(4) The school is not required to provide a meal at no cost if a student does not qualify for a free meal. Because federal funds may not be used for the expenses of these meals, the school must use state, local or other funds to cover the cost of the meals. The school will provide notice to parents at designated times during the school year of the school’s policy for providing meals to students when accounts are delinquent or when delinquent. If a student’s account is delinquent, the school may offer the student an alternate meal if needed.

Delinquent Balances and School Procedures

(1) There is a -\$15.00 limit on charge accounts. After the limit we may provide a reduced meal consisting of a grain, fruit, and protein.

(2) Lunch accounts with an unpaid balance from a previous school year will not be allowed to charge meals. Students will be allowed to bring a full cash payment for their meal that day, but no charging will be allowed until all past due funds are paid in full.

(3) We will notify parents of students with delinquent balances in their school lunch accounts by such methods as:

(a) the automated school lunch payment system;

(b) e-mail to the parent.

(c) written notice sent to the parent by mail or carried home by the student in a sealed envelope;

(d) telephone conversation with the parent.

(2) If parents have been notified, no payment has been received, the account may be turned over to a collection agency (no federal funds may be used for the collection of funds). Reagan Academy will notify parents at least twice annually concerning their procedures for the collection of past-due accounts.

(3) Reagan Academy may complete an application for free/reduced-price meals on behalf of the parents, if school personnel have knowledge of the parent's financial circumstances and parents give permission. The school will notify parents that an application has been completed on their behalf ("Eligibility Manual for School Meals," July 2015, pg. 45).

(4) If a student repeatedly has no money in the student's school lunch account and a student meal is not provided from home, school officials will consider the circumstances in the home (e.g., potential abuse or neglect, homelessness, etc.) and may contact the Reagan Academy social worker and/or Child Protective Services.

(5) We may use collection agencies to collect on delinquent accounts. They may also set aside or raise funds which may be used for payment of delinquent accounts. Parent organizations may hold fundraisers and individuals may donate funds to be used for such accounts. However funds are raised, it is the decision of the Foods Director as to what accounts the funds are applied to, although a detailed record must be kept and made available to administration or board members when requested.

Availability of this Policy to All Reagan Academy Families and Guardians

This policy is made available to the public on our website at reaganacademy.org.

This policy is also made available to all Reagan Academy families and guardians through the following communications:

- (1) At the beginning of the school year this policy will be sent out with our "back to school" packet.
- (2) Given to all new student families at enrollment.
- (3) Emailed to all families before the school year starts.
- (4) If we do not have an email address on file for your family you will receive a paper copy in the mail.

Nondiscrimination Statement:

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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.

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