

Upper Deerfield Township Board of Education

District Policy Manual

Business & Non-Instructional Operations

Series 3000

Meals on Credit / Charged Meals with Unpaid Balances

Policy 3542.46

Date Adopted: June 20, 2017

Date Revised: November 20, 2018

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While the Board of Education understands that there may be occasions when students fail to bring the required meal money to school for breakfast or lunch, the cafeteria personnel are not empowered to extend unlimited credit to students and shall notify the designated school building administrator of student account debt/delinquency for meal services.

In accordance with the provisions of state and federal law, if any money is owed for a student's school meals, the designated school building administrator shall contact the student's parent/guardian and provide notice of the debt before discontinuing meal service. When a student's account does not contain sufficient funds to purchase a standard paid lunch, students may receive standard paid lunches on a temporary-credit basis. Students will not be permitted to purchase a la carte items or snacks on a temporary-credit basis. If a child has money to purchase a reduced or full priced meal at the time of meal service, the child must be provided a meal. This money, in accordance with federal and state law, may not be used by the food service provider to repay previously unpaid charges if the child intended to use the money to purchase that day's meal. The designated school building administrator shall allow a period of ten (10) school days for the parent/guardian to pay the amount due.

It is the philosophy of this district that a lack of food will negatively impact a student's educational experience. Therefore, students may receive an alternate lunch so they may not be without food during the school day during the ten (10) day period that regular meals have been suspended. This alternative meal shall provide adequate nutritional benefits to the student and will be prepared in consideration of any food allergies the student may have. There is no requirement in federal or state law to provide an alternate meal. After the ten (10) day period, should the account not be current, parents/guardians must provide meals for the student.

Provided the designated school building administrator has sent the required letters to parents/guardians, as noted above, after two (2) meal charges, students will not be permitted to participate in the school lunch/breakfast program until meal charges are paid in full.

Any and all payments submitted by parents/guardians to cover charged meals shall be accounted for by the district's food service provider ~~SODEXO~~, who will notify the principals in conjunction with the school business administrator as the designated employee who is responsible for the administration and operation of the school lunch program in keeping with federal and state laws and the policies and directives of the board. No schools may enlist the assistance of unauthorized persons, such as parent or guardian volunteers to follow up with debt collection efforts.

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A parent who has received notification about their students' account being in arrears and who has not made payment within one week from the date of the letter will be requested to meet with the Principal or designee to discuss and resolve the matter. A parent's refusal to meet or take other steps to resolve the matter may be indicative of more serious matters. In these situations, the Principal or designee shall consult with and seek necessary services from both the County Board of Social Services and the Division of Child Protection and Permanency, as appropriate. When a parent's routine failure to provide breakfast or lunch is reasonably suspected to be indicative of child abuse or neglect, the Principal or designee shall immediately report such suspicion to the Division of Child Protection and Permanency as required in, and in accordance with the provisions of NJSA 9:6-8.10. Such reporting shall not be delayed to accommodate a parent's meeting with the Principal or designee.

Notification

A copy of this policy shall be provided in writing to all households at the start of each school year and to households whose children transfer into the district during the school year. A copy of this policy shall be included in student handbooks and online. Multiple methods of communication with parents/guardians in addition to letters may include phone calls, meetings, emails, and postings in the handbooks and website. This policy shall also be provided to all school and food service staff responsible for the enforcement of this policy, including school administrators to ensure this policy is supported. The food service program shall comply with all meal charge policy requirements of the United States and New Jersey Department of Agriculture and the provisions of NJSA 18A:33-21.

Legal References

- NJSA 18A:11-1 General mandatory powers and duties.
- NJSA 18A: 33-21 Schools meals, notification to parent of payment in arrears before denying a meal to a student.