

8505 MEAL CHARGE POLICY AND PROHIBITION AGAINST SHAMING

The Board of Education recognizes that on occasion, students may forget to bring meal money to school. To ensure that students do not go hungry, the Board in compliance with the United States Department of Agriculture Guidelines on Child Nutrition Programs authorizes the following as amended in NYS [Education Law §908](#):

- Reduced and full pay students in Grades K through 12 will be allowed to charge a reimbursable meal as a courtesy for students in the event they forget or lose their money.
- Students may charge a reimbursable meal of their choice. Charging of items outside of a reimbursable meal is expressly prohibited (such as a la carte items and snacks).
- Parents/guardians will be notified that a student's account balance is exhausted and has accrued meal charges when their account reaches a negative balance of \$5.00. The District will periodically continue to contact the parent/guardian to recover the funds by the end of the school year.
- Parents/guardians have the option to waive the charge limit of \$5.00 and restrict the charging of any meals (8505-E.2).
- The use of computerized systems to identify and record all sales, payments made and allow parents to deposit funds via the internet using credit card or checks is in place.
- Charged meals must be counted and claimed for reimbursement on the day that the student charged (received) the meal, not the day the charge is paid back. When charges are paid, these monies are not to be considered "à la carte" transactions.
- Families are encouraged to apply for free and reduced priced meals with applications accepted throughout the year. Applications are available on the District website and all schools and the District office. The District will make monthly attempts to determine if a student is directly certified and eligible for free meals using the documentation sent by the New York State Education Department.
- On an annual basis the District will send home to all parents prior to opening day an outline of the meal charge policy, which will also be published in appropriate school and District publications.
- In addition to sending home the income application form at the beginning of the school year, the District will make two additional attempts to encourage the parent/guardian to complete an income application on behalf of the student.
- School employees will not have any direct communication with students regarding overdue lunch balances or the status of their outstanding account balance.
- School staff will complete annual training on the Meal Charge Policy and Procedures.
- Parents/guardians may request refunds for withdrawn and graduating students by written request or through the District's meal account online system. Students who are graduating at the end of the year will be given the option to transfer to a sibling's account with a written request. Unclaimed funds must be requested within one school year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the District.
- The district will use administrative prerogative judiciously, only after using exhaustive efforts to obtain a completed application from the parent/guardian only with available information on family size and income.
- The District will coordinate with the foster, homeless, migrant, runaway coordinators to certify eligible students. Student Services shall communicate with the verification and/or reviewing official to make sure students receive free school meals, in accordance with federal law.

Cross-ref:

8520 Free and Reduced Price Food Services

Ref:

Child Nutrition Act of 1966

National School Lunch Act

Adoption date: Oct. 15, 2007

Revision date: June 17, 2013; August 27, 2015; August 27, 2018

Copiague Public Schools
