

LITCHFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICY CODE: EFAA

APPROVAL: October 16, 2019

FOOD SERVICES MEAL CHARGING

The Litchfield School District encourages all parents and guardians (hereinafter "parents") to provide a healthy breakfast and lunch for their student(s). Parents are welcome to send students to school with a "brown bag/lunch box" meal. The District provides the opportunity to purchase breakfast and lunch, as well as nutritional snacks, from the school cafeteria. Each meal meets or exceeds the federal nutrition standards. Payment is expected no later than when the meal is served. Payment may be in cash, check or as a debit against funds deposited into an established student lunch account.

The District uses a point-of-sale computerized meal payment system, which has an account set up for all students. Parents of students who will be purchasing meals using this system are required to establish and maintain a positive balance in the student's meal account.

Funds may be deposited into a student lunch account by cash, check, or online payment. Checks made out to the Litchfield School District should be presented to Cashier in the cafeteria or the Food Service Office. A check may also be mailed to: Litchfield School Lunch Program, 1 Highlander Court, Litchfield, NH 03052. The District utilizes Myschoolbucks.com online payment service: (<https://www.myschoolbucks.com/ver2/login/getmain?requestAction=home>). Parents are responsible for any fees charged by the online service. In accordance with United States Department of Agriculture ("USDA") guidance SP 02-2015, there will be no processing fee for deposits to a student meal account made by cash or check.

Bank fees incurred on any check returned for insufficient funds will be charged to the parent. The fee may not exceed \$25.00 (RSA 358-C:5,I). In accordance with RSA 358-C:5, notice of the fee charged for a check that is returned for insufficient funds shall be included in any letter sent to a parent seeking payment because the student meal account has a negative balance.

Parents who establish a meal account for their student are responsible for establishing with their student any restrictions the parent chooses to place on use of the account. Unless restricted by the parent, a student may purchase a la carte items in addition to the regular meal choices. Some students purchase more than one meal at one sitting.

It is the District's policy to ensure that students have access to healthy meals and that no student will be subject to different treatment from the standard school meal or school cafeteria procedures. Therefore, the District will allow students to purchase a meal, even if the student's meal account has insufficient funds. This policy applies to all meal offerings generally available at the cafeteria, with the exception of a la carte items or snacks.

Balance Statements

Low balance and negative balance statements will be sent out weekly via automated email. The online meal payment system also enables parents to set up low balance alerts emailed to them as a reminder to replenish their child's account.

Schools will never deny meals to:

- students regardless of any other charges at school;
- any student for disciplinary reasons;
- because of unpaid charges if the student has cash in hand for the current day's meal.

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Meal Charging

Students with a debt greater than \$15.00 will receive a choice of an alternate meal until the account is paid in full and in a positive standing. No student will be allowed to charge individual la carte or snack items, water bottle, juice or milk. The only exception will be if the student's parents have provided the District with specific written direction that the student not be provided with a school lunch program meal, the student has a meal sent from home, or otherwise has access to an appropriate meal. Under no circumstances will a student's selected meal be thrown away because of the status of the student's meal account.

Past Due Payments

When the past due amount of a student's meal account is greater than \$15.00 guidance counselors or the school principal may be asked to assist in determining whether the family has a financial need or has special circumstances requiring temporary aid. A free and reduced application will be mailed to families that have been identified by school staff.

Unresolved Debt

If after appropriate measures have been taken to notify the parents and make arrangements to collect debt that remains unresolved on a student account, the Superintendent may pursue payment through civil legal action, if deemed necessary. All debt collection efforts shall comply with RSA 358-C, NH Unfair, Deceptive or Unreasonable Collection Practices Act.

End of Year Balances

Graduating seniors will be given a refund of any money left in their account or the balance can be transferred to a sibling's account. In the event a negative balance remains on the student's account, the principal or designee will assist in collection of those balances. If at the end of the fiscal year uncollected debt in the student's account must be paid to the school meal program from other district funds, the unpaid charges shall be owed to the district.

Any students leaving the district with a positive meal account balance will be refunded any money left on their account.

Legal References

15 U.S.C. § 1692-1695 federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA)

42 U.S.C. 1758(b)(6), Use or disclosure of information

Civil Rights Act of 1964 & 7 C.F.R. Part 15, Subpart A & B

2 C.F.R. §200.426

7 C.F.R §210.09; 7 C.F.R §210.10; 7 C.F.R §210.15; 7 C.F.R. §245.5

USDA SP 46-2016 - No later than July 1, 2017, all SFA's operating the Federal school meal program are required to have a written meal charge policy. and

USDA Guidance SP37-2016: Meaningful Access for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) in the School Meal Programs

RSA 189:11-a

RSA 358-C , New Hampshire's Unfair, Deceptive or Unreasonable Collection Practices Act;

NH Dept. of Education Technical Advisory - Food and Nutrition Programs

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See Also: JLCF Student Wellness, EF Food Service Management, EFA Availability and Distribution of Healthy Foods

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