

LINCOLN PARK PERFORMING ARTS CHARTER SCHOOL

TITLE: FOOD SERVICES

ADOPTED: May 16, 2018

REVISED: December 11, 2018

Purpose:

The Board recognizes that students require adequate, nourishing food and beverages in order to grow, learn and maintain good health. The Board directs that students shall be provided with adequate space and time to eat meals during the school day.

Policy:

Policy for Students with Insufficient Funds for School Meals and Delinquent Accounts in the School Nutrition Program (aka Meal Charge Policy OR Unpaid Meal Charge Policy).

Regulations:

2 CFR Part 200 Section 143 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, Act 55 of 2017 amendment to Section 1337 of Pennsylvania School Code.

The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs are integral in ensuring that students have access to nutritious meals to support their academic success. It is also imperative to protect the financial stability of school nutrition program.

The intent of this policy is to establish a process and procedure to handle situations when children eligible for reduced-price or full-price meal benefits have insufficient funds to pay for school meals; as well as for the collection of unpaid meal charges and delinquent account debt.

1. Policy

All school food authorities (SFAs) must develop a written policy for children eligible for reduced-price or full-price meals that do not have money to pay for meals at the time of service and communicate the policy to all students and households.

- 1 a. Students who qualify for free meals will not be denied a reimbursable meal even if they have accrued a negative balance on their cafeteria account. Only in cases where a parent or guardian has directed the school, in writing, to withhold meals from a student can a meal be withheld.
- 1 b. Students who have money to pay for a reduced-price or full price meal at the time of service must be provided a meal. If the student intended to use the money for that day's meal, the SFA will not use the money to repay a negative balance or other unpaid meal charge debt.
- 1 c. Students without funds to pay for a reduced-price or full price meal will be permitted to charge Breakfast and Lunch meals.
- 1 d. Students are allowed to charge \$10.00 before their account is considered delinquent and attempts to notify the parent are initiated.
- 1 e. Students who charge a meal will receive a reimbursable meal that is offered to all other students that day.

- 1 f. A student who requests a school meal must be provided with one regardless of whether the student has money.
- 1 g. When a student owes money for five (5) or more TOTAL school meals, the school must make at least two attempts to reach the student's parent/guardian and request the parent or guardian apply for participation in the school meal program.
- 1 h. Communications regarding money owned by a student for school meals must be made to the student's parent or guardian and not to the student.
- 1 i. A student who cannot pay for a school meal or who owes money for school meals may not be publicly identified or stigmatized.
- 1 j. A student who cannot pay for a school meal may not be required to perform chores or other work to pay for the school meal. A student may be discreetly provided his or her account balance if he/she asks the cashier.
- 1 k. A student may not be required to discard a school meal after it was served to the student due to the student's inability to pay for the meal or the amount of money owed by the student for prior school meals.
- 1 l. No students, under any circumstances, are permitted to accrue charges from sales of non-reimbursable meals or snacks.

2. Communicating the Policy

The policy must be communicated to all students and households by the beginning of the school year. SFAs must document methods of communicating the policy to households and training of staff responsible for policy enforcement.

- 2 a. The written meal charge policy will be communicated to the household by posting on the Lincoln Park Performing Arts Charter School's website, and specific points will be included in an informational form distributed on the first day of school and to all incoming transfer students during the school year.
- 2 b. Food Service staff will receive training on meal charge policy and record of training will be maintained as part of the professional development portfolio.
- 2 c. Documentation of the communication and training plan will be maintained for the Federal Program Administrative Review.

3. Notifying the Household of Negative Balance in Student Cafeteria Account

Schools must provide a meal to a student who requests one, regardless of whether the student has money to pay for the meal or owes money for school meals. When a student owes money for five or more school meals, the school board must make at least two attempts to reach the parents to have them apply for participation in the free/reduced lunch program and may offer assistance in helping them apply. Schools may not publicly identify or stigmatize a student who cannot pay or who owes money for school meals.

- 3 a. The student's household will be notified when a student's cafeteria account falls above - \$10.00
- 3 b. The SFA will notify households of negative balances over \$10.00 by sending confidential, sealed letters home with students. Households will receive a phone call from the Food Service Director or Food Service Administrative Assistant for students who have a negative balance equal to 5 meals charges or higher. The Food Service Department will also utilize the school messaging system when able to notify parents of negative balances that may be lower than five (5) TOTAL meal charges.
- 3 c. Notifications to households will include the amount of unpaid meal charges, expected payment dates, the consequences of non-payment and where to go for questions or assistance.

- 3 d. The consequences of non-payment will be determined on a case-by-case basis but may include filing claim with a local magistrate, depending on the amount of the negative balance.
- 3 e. The persons responsible for managing unpaid meal charges are:
 - a. Food Service staff will collect payment for meals at the POS.
 - b. Food Service Department will contact households.

4. Delinquent Debt

Delinquent debt is allowable in the School nutrition program and may be carried over to one successive school year. Bad debt is defined as delinquent debt that is deemed uncollectible at the end of the school year. Bad debt is unallowable in the SNP and cannot be carried over to the next school year. Funds resulting from bad debt cannot be recovered using SNP funds and must be offset by non-federal sources.

- 4 a. At the end of the school year, the Food Service Director and Business Manager will evaluate all delinquent debt for conversion to bad debt. Bad debt will be restored to the SNP from the general fund prior to the end of the same fiscal year.
- 4 b. Efforts to collect delinquent and/or bad debt will be handled by:
 - a. Sending Letters and School Messenger notices
 - b. Making Phone calls to households
 - c. Supplying a Notice of Adverse Action/potential collection routes
 - d. Communicating consequences to household which may include referral to small claims court or local judicial system.
- 4 c. The School may accept gifts to the food service account that are in compliance with federal regulations, 2 CFR, Part 200. If the gift or donation is not in conflict of 2 CFR, Part 200, the School may accept gifts or donations for the direct benefit of students. The revenue must have a separate account funding number so it is not comingled with food service account revenue funds from federal and state reimbursements or daily food sales. The donated or gifted funds may be transferred to the food service account or fund, at the appropriate time, to offset delinquent student meal accounts.
- 4 d. The Food Service Department may also use remaining funds from withdrawn students whose positive balances were non-refundable to apply towards negative balances. The same accounting procedures as noted in 4 c above will apply.

5. Collection procedures for Delinquent and Bad Debt- Adverse Action

The Food Service Department will use various means for recovering bad debt, i.e., utilizing a collection process, local judicial system, etc. Funds from the SFA account may be used to pay for costs associated with a collection agency.

6. Other Considerations

A student with a negative balance of \$25.00 or greater will be excluded from all school-sponsored social activities (dances, field trips, etc.)