

## **School Lunch Program Meal Charges**

### **General**

The District encourages all parents and guardians to provide a healthy breakfast and lunch for their student(s). Parents are welcome to send students to school with a meal from home, and the district provides the opportunity to purchase breakfast and lunch from the school cafeteria. Each meal meets or exceeds the federal nutrition standards. The District's policy is to ensure that students have access to healthy meals and that no student will be subject to different treatment or offered different choices based on their meal account balance.

Parents of students required to pay the full or reduced price for meals must ensure that the school lunch program is paid for their student's meals. 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.

### **Free or Reduced Price Meals**

The District participates in the federally supported program to provide free or reduced price meals to students from families whose economic circumstances make paying for meals difficult. Income guidelines for eligibility are based on family size and are updated each year by the USDA. The District will ensure parents are informed of the eligibility requirements and application procedures for free or reduced cost meals as well as the requirements of this policy. The District will automatically apply free eligibility to all students found to be categorically eligible via direct certification system (i.e. Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program [SNAP]), at least three times each school year. Parents shall be provided with a copy of this policy and an application for free or reduced cost meals annually at the start of the school year through a mailing or in the parents' handbook, or enrollment of a transfer student during the school year.

### **Student Meal Accounts**

The District uses Mealtime, a point-of-sale computerized meal payment system which has an account 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 on-line payment at [www.mymealtime.com](http://www.mymealtime.com). This system allows a parent to check their students balance and account activity at any time with no charges. Parents are responsible for any fees charged by the on-line service, however there will be no processing fee for deposits to a student meal account made by cash or check. The City of Laconia assesses a fee of \$25.00 that will be charged to the parents for each check returned for insufficient funds.

### **Parental Restrictions on Use of Student Meal Account**

Parents who establish a meal account for their student are responsible for communicating with their student any restrictions the parent chooses to place on use of the account. Unless restricted by the parent, a student with a positive account balance or cash in hand may purchase a la carte items in addition to the regular meal choices. Students with a negative account balance may not charge a la carte or snack items. It is the parents' responsibility to provide their student with a meal from home or to pay for school prepared meals. When parents chose to provide meals sent from home, it is the parents' responsibility to explain to their student the necessity of the student not using the school meal program.

### **Balance Statements**

The District will work proactively with parents to maintain a positive balance in their student's meal account. Balance statements are automatically sent to households beginning when the account balance becomes lower than \$10.00 for full price accounts and \$5 for reduced price accounts. These statements are emailed to households with an email address on file, and sent home in printed form with students to all others. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure the district has the correct email address on file. ¶ Parents may also set up additional, custom email notifications using mymealtime.com.

An automated notification will be sent when an account balance becomes negative. Parents are expected to pay off the negative balance. Regardless of the negative balance amount, should a student with a negative balance in his or her meal account seeks to purchase a meal with cash or check, the student will be allowed to do so. There is no requirement that the funds be applied first to the debt. If a student's account accrues to a negative balance and the household subsequently qualifies for free meals, the household will still be responsible to pay off the negative balance in a timely manner. Parents may request that funds from one child's account be transferred to another child to resolve negative balance by contacting the foodservice bookkeeper.

### **Unresolved Debt**

If the account balance reaches \$50.00 and parents continue to fail to provide the student with a meal sent from home, continue to fail to provide funds for their student to use the school lunch program, continue to refuse to cooperate with reasonable requests by District staff to address the overdue debt, the Superintendent may pursue payment through civil legal action, including filing a claim in court pursuant to RSA Chapter 503.

To file a program complaint of discrimination with the USDA, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This District is an equal opportunity provider

**Adopted: October 15, 2019**