

## LENOX PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### MEAL CHARGE POLICY

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal charge account procedures throughout the district. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the Food Service Department. The goals of this policy are:

- To establish a consistent district policy regarding charges and collection of charges.
- To treat all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts.
- To support positive situations with district staff, district business policies, students and parents/guardians/adult students to the maximum extent possible.
- To establish policies appropriate for age.
- To encourage parent/guardian/adult students to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student.

#### **SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:**

The Food Service Department: Responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the school district of outstanding balances. The Food Service department is also responsible for notifying the student's parent/guardian/adult student of low or outstanding balances.

The School District: Responsible for supporting the Food Service Department in collection activities.

The Parent/Guardian/Adult Student: Immediate payment.

#### **REGULATIONS:**

1) All students

a) All students will be allowed to charge up to a maximum dollar equivalent of three (3) meals which will be known as the "account cap".

(1) These meals will include anything on the menu;

(2) Notices of low or deficit balances will be sent to parents/guardians at regular intervals during the school year.

3) When the child reaches the "account cap" they will only be offered designated a menu alternate of a cold cheese sandwich with milk, fruit and a vegetable.

(4) The designated menu alternate will be charged to the child's lunch account at the standard lunch rate. It will be reported as a meal to the state and federal school lunch authorities and thus will be

eligible for reimbursement. Parents/Guardians are responsible for payment of these meals to the food service program.

b) Middle and High school students:

(1) When a student has a negative balance, no a la carte items will be sold to the child.

2) Checks Returned for Non-Sufficient Funds will result in a \$10.00 penalty fee that is charged by the bank to the Town for a NSF check. The penalty fee and the amount of the check will be deducted from the child/children's lunch account immediately upon notice from the bank. A Payment must be received within ten (10) days of the date of the letter.

3) At the first of June the food service program must begin to close the books for the school year. As a result all meals must be prepaid.

a) Parents/Guardians/Adult students will be sent a written request for "Payment in Full."

4) Both school cafeterias possess computerized point of sale or cash register systems that maintain a record of all monies deposited and spent for each student and said record will be made available to the parent upon request.

5) Meals can be prepaid at any time. Prepayments are a convenience for families. Prepayments can be made by check presented to your child's cafeteria. Prepayments can also be made through My School Bucks by going to [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com). This gives the parents the capability of using their credit/debit card for lunches and a la carte purchases. There are numerous advantages to using My School Bucks, including updated account balances, e-mail notification of low balance accounts and a history of purchases made by the student.

a) **Blocks on Accounts:** A parent may call or email the Food Service Director to place a block on their child's account to prohibit the purchase of a la carte items or set dollar caps.

b) **Refunds**

1) **Withdrawn Students:** For any student who is withdrawn, a written request for a refund of any money remaining in their account must be submitted within 90 days of departure.

2) **Graduating Students:** Any funds remaining on a graduating students account will be transferred to a siblings account if applicable. All other graduating students will be issued a refund.

3) **Unclaimed Funds:** All refunds must be requested within 90 days. Any unclaimed funds after 90 days will then become the property of the Lenox Public Schools Food Service Program.