

Rochester School Department

Meal Charging Procedures

The Rochester School Department provides the opportunity to purchase breakfast, snacks, lunch and other items from the school cafeteria. Each meal meets or exceeds the federal nutrition standards.

The school lunch program is required by federal law to operate as a non-profit which must end each fiscal year without a negative balance. Uncollected debt must be paid to the school meals program from other funds. Per USDA regulations, bad/uncollectable debt is not an allowable cost to be incurred within the school food service program. Therefore, parents/guardians of students required to pay the full or reduced price for meals must ensure that the school meals program is paid for their students meals. The District's procedure is to escalate efforts to bring student meal accounts into a positive balance, to avoid circumstances where these accounts build significant debt.

Student Meal Accounts

The District uses a point of sale computerized meal payment system which has an account for students. Students who purchase meals using this system are required to establish and maintain a positive balance on the students meal account.

Funds may be deposited into a student meals account by cash, check, or on-line payment. Checks can be made out to: Rochester School Department and should be presented to the Cashier at the cafeteria. Payment is expected no later than when the meal is served. A check may also be mailed to the Rochester School Department, Spaulding High School, 130 Wakefield Street, Rochester, NH 03867 Attn: April Buckley. The district also utilizes the services of My School Bucks. Funds can also be deposited into an established student meals account through www.myschoolbucks.com. A mobile app is available as well. Parents/guardians can also set up a low balance notification and/or automatic replenishment within the website or app. Parents/guardians are responsible for any fees charged by the on-line service.

A fee of \$25.00 will be charged to the parents/guardians for each check returned for insufficient funds or any other reason used by the bank.

Balance Statements

The District will work proactively with parents/guardians to maintain a positive balance in their students meal account. The Food Service Director has established a procedure at each school requiring that a negative balance statement be sent to parents/guardians whenever the balance in the students' meal account falls below zero. These notices are sent weekly on Tuesday or Wednesday afternoon.

The District encourages parents/guardians to monitor the student's use of the meal account to ensure that a sufficient balance is available at all times for their student to charge meals.

Each negative balance notice to parents/guardians will include information on the students' meal

account balance, how to make payments, and contact information for district staff for assistance. These notices will be sent via email.

The District's procedure is to ensure that students have access to healthy meals.

Therefore:

- The District will allow students in Grade K-5, with no available funds, to purchase 3 meals and the Middle School allowed to purchase 2 meals. Once they have gone into the negative, the student will be allowed an alternative meal.
- High School students with no funds on account or in hand, and/or with negative balances, will be informed they will not be able to participate in the lunch program until such time as their account has sufficient funds. Students will be informed during the school day before the lunch period that they are not to enter the cafeteria line.
- Students with a negative balance will not be allowed to charge ala carte items.
- If a student with a negative balance in his/her meal account seeks to purchase an ala carte item with cash or check, the student will not be allowed to make that purchase and the cash/check will be applied to the student's meal account.
- If a student with a negative balance in his/her meal account seeks to purchase a meal with cash or check, the student will be allowed to do so.
- Under no circumstances will a student's selected meal be thrown away because of the status of the student's meal account. High School students who arrive at the Point of Sale and do not have sufficient funds and/or have a negative balance will be allowed to charge the meal and referred to school administrators for further action as warranted.
- Students will not be allowed to graduate unless the unpaid balances are resolved.
- Staff/Faculty accounts will be set to a no charge status. The account must be in good standing to allow meal and/or ala carte purchases to be charged to a staff meal account.

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 updated each year by the USDA. The District will ensure parents/guardians are informed of the eligibility requirements and application procedure for free or reduced cost meals as well as the requirements of this procedure.

Parents/guardians shall be provided with a copy of this procedure and an application for free or reduced cost meals annually at the start of the school year. Each notice shall also identify a member of the District staff, with contact information, who is available to answer questions or assist the parents/guardians with applying for free or reduced price meals.

The District will proactively enroll students found to be categorically eligible into the free or reduced price meal program. The District will seek to enroll eligible students in the free or reduced price meal program upon learning from any source of the student's potential eligibility. When eligibility is established, the District will apply the earliest effective date permitted by federal and state law.

Unresolved Debt

If parents/guardians continue to fail to provide funds for their student to use the school meals program,

continue to refuse to cooperate with reasonable requests by District staff to address the overdue debt, the food Service Director, acting in the best interest of the District, will notify the Business Administrator to determine if additional action is needed to pursue collection of the outstanding debt.

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 procedure.

RSA 189:11-a

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

NH Department of Education Technical Advisory – Food and Nutrition Programs

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