

Meal Charge and Prohibition Against Meal Shaming Policy

I. Purpose

The goal of the Greenville Central School District is to provide student access to nutritious no- or low-cost meals each school day and to ensure that a pupil whose parent/guardian has unpaid school meal fees is not shamed or treated differently than a pupil whose parent/guardian does not have unpaid meal fees.

Unpaid charges place a financial burden on our school. The purpose of this policy is to insure compliance with federal requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances to ensure that the student is not stigmatized, distressed or embarrassed.

The intent of this policy is to establish procedures to address unpaid meal charges throughout the Greenville Central School District in a way that does not stigmatize, distress or embarrass students. The provisions of this policy pertain to regular priced reimbursable school breakfast, and lunch meals. The Greenville Central School District provides this policy as a courtesy to those students in the event they forget or lose their money. Charging of items outside of the reimbursable meals (such as a la carte items or adult meals) is expressly prohibited.

II. Policy

SCHOOL MEALS:

All students upon the student's request, regardless of whether their parent or legal guardian has unpaid charges for school meals and regardless of their ability to pay at the register, shall be provided with a school meal of the student's choice from the available reimbursement meal choice for that school day.

Free Meal Benefit - Free eligible students will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch meal of their choice each day. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.

Reduced Meal Benefit - Reduced eligible students will be allowed to receive a breakfast of their choice for \$0.25 and lunch of their choice for \$0.25 each day. The charge meals offered to students will be reimbursable meals available to all students, unless the student's parent or guardian has specifically provided written permission to the school to withhold a meal. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.

Full Pay Students - Students will pay for meals at the school's published paid meal rate each day. The charge meals offered to students will be reimbursable meals available to all students, unless the student's parent or guardian has specifically provided written permission to the school to withhold a meal. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid; no a la carte charges will be allowed on accounts with negative balances.

There will be no charging of adult (employees, visitors, or volunteers) school meals.

Nothing in this plan is intended to allow for the unlimited accrual of debt.

ONGOING STAFF TRAINING:

- Staff will be trained annually and throughout the year as needed on the procedures for managing meal charges using the NYSED Webinar and/or the school's training program.
- Staff training includes ongoing eligibility certification for free or reduced price meals.

PARENT NOTIFICATION:

- Parents/guardians will be notified that a student's account balance is exhausted within five (5) school days and then every two (2) weeks thereafter. This notification will continue regularly until the account is replenished.

PARENT OUTREACH:

- The school district shall notify parents/guardians in writing on an annual basis at the start of the school year and to families transferring during the year, outlining the requirements of this policy. The policy will also be published in appropriate school and in District publications and posted on the District's website.
- Staff will communicate with parents/guardians with five (5) or more meal charges to determine eligibility for free or reduced price meals.
- School staff will make two documented attempts to reach out to parents/guardians to complete a meal application in addition to the application and instructions provided in the school enrollment packet.
- School staff will contact the parent/guardian to offer assistance with completion of meal application to determine if there are other issues within the household causing the child to have insufficient funds, offering any other assistance that is appropriate.

MINIMIZING STUDENT DISTRESS:

- School will not publicly identify or stigmatize any student on the line or discuss any outstanding meal debt in the presence of any other students.
- Students who incur meal charges will not be required to wear a wristband or handstamp, or to do chores or work to pay for meals.
- Schools will not throw away a meal after it has been served because of the student's inability to pay for the meal or because of previous meal charges.
- Schools will not take any action directed at a pupil to collect unpaid school meal fees.
- Schools will deal directly with parents/guardians in effort to collect unpaid account balances and why certain items (e.g., a la carte, etc.) could not be provided.

ONGOING ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION:

- School staff will conduct direct certification with NYSSIS or using NYSED Roster Upload at least quarterly to maximize free eligibility.

- School staff will provide parents/guardians with free and reduced price application and instructions at the beginning of each school year in school enrollment packet.
- Schools will provide at least two additional free and reduced price applications throughout the school year to families identified as owing meal charges.
- Schools will contact the parent or guardian to offer assistance with a meal application, determine if there are other issues within the household that have caused the child to have insufficient funds to purchase a school meal, and offer any other assistance that is appropriate.
- If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the school administration will investigate the situation more closely and take further action as needed.
- Staff responsible for assisting foster, homeless and migrant students shall coordinate with the food services staff to ensure such student receives free school meals.

Students/Parents/Guardians may pay for meals in advance on the MySchoolBucks website, <https://www.myschoolbucks.com/ver2/login/getmain?requestAction=home>, pay by cash or with a check payable to the *Greenville Central School Food Service Fund*. Further details are available on our webpage at <http://www.greenville.k12.ny.us/foodsvcs/>. Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a child may be without meal money on any given day. Any remaining funds for a particular student may/will be carried over to the next school year.

Refunds for withdrawn and graduating students will be refunded any money remaining in their account. Students who are graduating at the end of the year will be given the option to transfer to a sibling's account by request.

Collection of owed balances will follow the above procedures for unpaid meals.

Adopted 8.20.18