

File EFD

MEAL SERVICES PAYMENT AND COLLECTION

The Winchendon Public School District offers nutritious meals and healthy food choices at a minimal cost. In order to avoid adversely affecting the food services program financially, the School Committee establishes policy regarding the charging of school lunch and breakfast items. Negative balances affect the ability of the program to operate in a fiscally responsible manner.

At any time during the school year, parents or guardians are encouraged to file an application to participate in the national free and reduced meals program. Applications will be sent home with each student at the start of each school year; additionally, applications will be available at each school and year-round from the district website. All information provided is confidential. **Families are strongly encouraged to apply as soon as possible as it benefits their student and the district.** Any outstanding money owed to the district's food service program prior to being approved for free or reduced lunch is still owed by the parent/guardian.

Cash at time of purchase is accepted at all district schools. The school district will also offer use of an automated system to record pre-payments for meals. The system works like a debit/checking account, requiring deposits in the student account in order to provide meals to students. **Parents/guardians must keep a positive balance in their child's account at all times as no "charging" is allowed.** The Business Manager will make available updated instructions before the start of each school year on how to set up an automated account; this information will be posted on our district website and will be sent home with each student at the start of a school year.

If the account of a student drops below a set threshold amount (for instance, below \$10.00), a "low balance" notice will be sent to the parent/guardian. **If a student account drops to \$0.00, no further credit will be extended;** again, the parent/guardian will be notified. Student debt will not be resolved or collected at the Point of Sale (POS)/while in the food line/or between student and Food Service worker. All outstanding balances will be reconciled by the Food Service department and parent/guardian.

In the case a parent/guardian fails to provide the student with a meal from home or the proper cash for lunch, or if the student account balance is at \$0.00, the district will provide the student a USDA nutritionally complete meal for a maximum of ten (10) school days. **However, the alternate meal will be charged to the student; the family is responsible for payment of these meals.** If the parent/guardian thereafter fails to provide the student with a home lunch or lunch money, assigned school district personnel shall intercede on behalf of the student by filing a report with the Department of Human Services. It is the intent that district personnel be responsible to simply remind students/families of due balances if periodically necessary; **it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to be aware of account balances and to meet the nutritional needs of the child.** Students will be offered regular meal choices once their account has sufficient funds deposited in it.

Any fee or charge due to any school in the District and not paid at the end of the school year will be carried forward to the next succeeding school year, as such debts are considered to be debts of the student to the District and not to a particular school.

Any family with a previous year ending negative balance will not be allowed to have an account for any charges the following year until the negative balance is cleared.

All unpaid fees or charges in the district, including unpaid Food Service balances, are subject to permissible penalties including denial of student participation in extra class activities (such as clubs, sports, proms, school government, school plays, etc.) until payment is made. (Ref Policy JQ Student Fees, Fines, and Charges) If the District employs a Food Service Management Company, the Business Manager and company will ensure that all district policies, procedures, and charge protocols are followed.

Returned Checks: Bank fees for a check returned for insufficient funds will be charged to the student account. If two checks are returned for insufficient funds, the student will be required to pay in cash for the remainder of the school year.

Collection: The school district is willing to work with families on payment plans for school lunch debt; for instance 75% of consistent and continued payment would be applied to an active student account while 25% payment would apply toward outstanding balance. The Business Manager ensures reasonable efforts are made to collect all delinquent food service charges. Documented attempts to notify parents/guardians of unpaid accounts will be made; procedures to notify of balances are developed /implemented by the Business Manager's office. All excessive balances by families, especially accumulated, are subject to referral to a collection agency at the family's expense.

Refunds: For any student who is withdrawn, a written or email request for refund of money in their account must be submitted to the Business Manager. If a family no longer has children attending school, a written or email request for refund of the family account must be submitted to the Business Manager. Funds for families with students continuing the following school year will remain in the family account for the next school year. All refunds must be requested within one year; thereafter unclaimed funds become the property of the Food Services Revolving Account.

New Policy 2/06/14

Winchendon Public Schools

USDA Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, religious creed, disability, age,

political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information

(e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at:

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.

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