

## LACKAWANNA TRAIL SCHOOL DISTRICT LOCAL MEAL CHARGING POLICY & GUIDELINES

The Lackawanna Trail School District (the District) is committed to providing nutritious meals to all students. The District must establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the District. Unpaid charges place a financial burden on the food service department and District. The goals of this policy are:

1. To establish a consistent and official district policy regarding meal charges and collection of charges.
2. To treat all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts.
3. To support positive situations with District staff, District business policies, students and parent/guardian to the maximum extent possible.
4. To establish policies that are age appropriate.
5. To encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are responsible for ensuring that students have the appropriate form of exchange to pay for their meal. In the event the parent(s)/guardian(s) believe they may be eligible for free/reduced meals, they may request assistance from District personnel in completing the Household Application for Free and Reduced School Meals. In accordance with Act 55 of 2017 Section 1337, Act 39 of 2018 and Act 16 of 2019, the District will implement the follow practices in accordance with these state regulations:

- The District will not deny a school food program meal to any student who requests one but does not have the money to pay for the meal at the time of service or in his or her meal account. The District will only withhold meals from a student if they receive written direction from a parent or guardian. (Act 55 of 2017)
- Communication about a student's school meal debt will be directed to the parent/guardian, not to the student. Such communication will occur when the student owes money for five or more meals. The District will make at least two attempts to reach the parent or guardian. The District may give a letter addressed to the parent or guardian in a sealed envelope that states "confidential-to be opened by addressee only" to the student to deliver home. The District may also communicate meal debt information to the parent(s)/guardian(s) via text message, email and/or phone calls. The student will be allowed to continue to charge meals to their account regardless of the success in contacting the parent(s)/guardian(s). Parents/Guardians may also be notified when meal account balances are beginning to run low, or prior to five meals being charged. These types of communications will be directed to the parent/guardian, and not the student. (Act 55 of 2017)
- For students enrolled in grades 9-12, the board of school directors will allow school food service personnel to direct communications regarding a low balance or money owed to the student if the communications are made individually to the student by appropriate school personnel and are made discreetly. This will be in addition to the communication to the parent. (Act 39 of 2018)

- The District will not publicly identify or stigmatize students because they have a school meal debt. Likewise, students will not be made to do chores or other work to earn a school meal. The District will not direct a student to discard a meal that has been served to them because they cannot pay for it at the time of service or because they have an existing school meal debt. (Act 55 of 2017)
- The District may restrict privileges or activities of students who owe money for school meals in cases where those same restrictions apply to students who owe money for other school-related purposes. (Act 39 of 2018)

### **A La Carte Items**

A la carte items are not part of the National School Lunch Program. ***A student, whose account is in a negative balance, will not be able to purchase a la carte items by charging their account or when they present cash at the point of sale.*** Refusal of a la carte sales will be done discretely as to not identify a student with a negative account.

### **Collection Efforts**

The District will engage a collection agency to collect on outstanding balances in excess of \$50.00. The cost of collection will be added to the outstanding school meal debt for students in a “paid” meal status.

### **Accounts of Transferred Students or Graduated Students**

Refunds from student(s) account(s) are permitted only in the event that a student leaves the school district or the refund is requested by the parent(s)/guardian(s) under special circumstances.

Any unclaimed funds remaining for which a refund was not requested at June 30<sup>th</sup> will be transferred to a sibling account or split evenly between multiple siblings. If no sibling account exists, the remaining balance will be transferred to cancel outstanding debt of graduated students. If no balance of graduated students exists, the remaining amounts will be used to offset the outstanding debt of transferred students.

All remaining amounts will be transferred to account 99999 to be utilized to offset future debt of graduated or transferred students.

### **Policy Administration**

- I. Free and Reduced Students.
  - a. Free lunch status permits a child to receive a free meal every day.
  - b. Reduced status allows a student to receive meals at a price greatly reduced from the regular meal price.
  - c. Paid status defers to full price meal option as included in the summer student packets with the exception of a Universal Free Program such as the Universal Free Breakfast.