

UNPAID MEAL CHARGE AND DEBT COLLECTION PROCEDURES

August 8, 2017

The Wrightstown Community School District aims to provide nutritious and appetizing meals to students each day. The District recognizes that good nutrition is vital to students' health, their mental and physical growth, and their readiness to participate and learn at school.

The food service program is operated in conjunction with federal and state school nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, and the Special Milk Program. It is the district's goal that the food service program be operated in a manner that is financially self-supporting on an operational basis, with allowances for capital expenditures (e.g., facilities and capital equipment.) Unpaid meal charges place a large financial burden on the food service program and the following procedures outline unpaid meal charges and debt collection.

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General Statement of Procedures

- A. **The Wrightstown Community School District recognizes that the parent/guardian is responsible for providing lunch for their children.**
- B. The Wrightstown Community School District offers breakfast and lunch meals that meet state and federal guidelines.
- C. The District annually establishes the unsubsidized price to be charged for school meals.
- D. The Wrightstown Community School District accepts payments in cash, check or online payments.
- E. Free and reduced meal applications are distributed to all families in the district prior to the students' first day of classes. In addition, applications are available in all school offices, the district office, or the food service office. If household income or size changes, families can apply for meal benefits anytime during the school year.

Charge Procedures

- Family accounts will be allowed to charge up to a negative -\$10.00.
- If a student starts the school year with a -\$10.00 balance, the lunch account will not be activated; students will not be eligible for meals; until the balance is paid, repayment plan is in place, or the student qualifies for free or reduced meals.
- Students in elementary grades will always be offered an alternate meal to eat at lunch.
- An alternate lunch meal consisting of a sandwich, fruit and milk, which meets the required meal pattern guidelines will be offered to students with an overdrawn account for 3 days at the middle and high school. These bagged lunches will be placed in the front office with the administrative assistant and students will be called to the office to retrieve the bagged meal prior to lunch time to eliminate overt identification in the lunch line.
- No alternate meal will be provided at breakfast to any students with a -\$10.00 balance.
- Students with overdrawn lunch accounts are not allowed to charge ala'carte items.
- Overdrawn accounts that have "cash in hand" may pay cash for meals and ala'carte items at any time.

Notification of Account Status

- Families can check their lunch account balance at any time via Skyward Parent Access.
- Households will be notified daily of student meal account balances via text, email or phone call when the family lunch account reaches a positive \$10.00 to allow time to replenish funds; it is the responsibility of the parents to notify food service if they are not receiving notifications or if there is a change in phone number or email address.
- Families may contact the food service department at EXT 6112 for lunch account balances when necessary.
- Students may be given written and/or verbal reminders regarding the need for lunch money.
- A letter/invoice may be sent via US Post to the household requesting payment.
- Notification methods may be different depending on grade groups or individual circumstances.

Collection of Unpaid Meal Debt

When the meal balance is -\$10.00 the following collection actions will be taken:

- The Food Service Assistant or Director will contact the household to request payment.
- The Food Service staff will notify the building principals if no response or payment is received. The principal or designee will contact the parent/guardian to review with them their responsibility to assure meals are provided to their children and/or to request payment or determine an appropriate solution.
- Assistance from the county social services may be requested by the school if the parents refuse to provide meals (bagged lunch) or pay for school meals for their children.
- A formal letter will be sent to the household notifying them that the debt will be turned over to a collection agency and the student meal account will be closed.
- Unpaid meal charges for transferring or graduating students will result in student record holding until charges are paid in full. A collection agency will be used to collect the unpaid meal charges.
- The expectation is that all lunch charges owed to the district will be paid in full on the last day of each school year. Any balances are carried forward to the following school year.

Refunds

- A refund request must be provided in writing or via email for any money remaining in the lunch account.
- All refunds must be requested within one year, unclaimed funds from transferred or graduating students more than a year old and have not been requested become the property of the Wrightstown Food Service Department and will be used to operate the program.

Donation of Excess Funds

- At the end of each school year, families may choose to donate excess funds from their lunch accounts to students with delinquent lunch balances. Or, donations may be made at any time to students who have delinquent lunch accounts. Please contact the Food Service Department at EXT. 6112 for details.