

AYER SHIRLEY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MEAL CHARGE POLICY

PURPOSE:

To establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the district. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the food service department and the district. The goals of this policy are:

- To establish a consistent district policy regarding charges and collections of charges.
- To treat all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts.
- To support positive situations with district staff, district business policies, students and parents/guardians/adult students to the maximum extent possible.
- To establish policies appropriate for age.
- To encourage the parent/guardian/and student to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student.

SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

The Food Service Department: Responsible for notifying the student's parent/guardian of low or outstanding balances. Responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the school district of outstanding balances.

The School District: Responsible for supporting the Food Service Department in collection activities.

The Parent/Guardian: To meet the financial obligations of the food service charges.

REGULATIONS:

- 1) All students
- a) All students:

Will be allowed to charge up to a maximum dollar equivalent of ten (10) meals which will be known as the "account cap".

1. These meals will include anything on the monthly menu.
2. Email notification of low balances \$5 or below will be sent home to parents/guardians weekly.
3. Email notification of deficit balances will be sent to parents/guardians daily.
4. When a child reaches the "account cap" they will only be offered a designated alternate menu consisting of a sunbutter sandwich or a cheese sandwich, fruit, vegetable and milk. Parents/guardians always have the option of sending child to school with a cold lunch.

5. The designated menu alternate will be charged to the child's account at the standard lunch rate and will be reported to the state as a reimbursable meal.

Parents are responsible for payment for those meals.

b) Middle and high school students:

1. When a student has a negative balance, no a la carte items will be sold to the child.

2) Returned Checks:

Checks returned for insufficient funds result in a fee that is charged by the bank to the district. The parent will be notified of the insufficient funds. The fee and the amount of the check will immediately be deducted from the student's account. A payment must be received within (10) days of the date of notification.

3) Payments:

The Ayer Shirley Regional School District can accept payment for meals upon purchase in the form of:

- a. Cash or check at the register.
- b. Prepayment through myschoolbucks.com

4) All schools possess a computerized Point of Sale (POS) system that tracks all monies deposited and spent for each student and said record will be made available to the parent upon request.

5) Meals may be prepaid at any time. Prepayments are a convenience for families and can be made by check at the POS/cash register. Prepayments can also be made through My School Bucks by going to www.myschoolbucks.com. This gives the parents the capability of using their debit/credit card for lunches and a la carte purchases. There are numerous advantages to using My School Bucks, including updated account balances, e-mail notification of low balance accounts and a history of purchases made by the student.

Food Services Program End-Of-School Year Closeout

- *All accounts must be settled by the end of the school year.*
- Parents/Guardians will be sent a written request for payment in full. The payment requests will be mailed home.
- All charges not paid before the end of the school year, and all credits will be carried forward into the next school year. Seniors must pay all charges before receiving their cap and gown.
- All parents of seniors will receive a notice in May of funds remaining in their child's account. Parents will receive a letter to elect to move the balance into a sibling's lunch account or to elect a refund. All refund requests will be sent to the food services office and processed for payment.

- Formal collection agency activity by the court or agency can be initiated on any account 60 days in arrears.

Blocks on Accounts

A parent may request in writing to the Food Service Director that a block be placed on their child's account to prohibit the purchase of a la carte items or set a dollar cap. The school business manager may instruct the Food Services Director to place a block on a student's account to prohibit the purchase of a la carte items due to non-payment of food service fees.

Refunds

- Withdrawn students – for any student who is withdrawn, a written or e-mailed request for a refund of any money remaining in their account must be submitted within 90 days of departure.
- Graduating Students – students who are graduating at the end of the year will be given a refund or funds will be transferred to a sibling's account at the parent's request.
- Unclaimed funds – all funds must be requested within 90 days. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the Ayer Shirley Regional School District.

Debt Forgiveness

Nothing in this policy precludes representatives of the district from pursuing and/or implementing compassionate debt forgiveness avenues for legitimate unforeseen circumstances which have contributed to the debt.

First Reading, May 25, 2017

Second Reading, June 6, 2017

Adopted by ASRSD, June 21, 2017