

MEAL CHARGE

I. Policy

The Gloucester Public School District seeks to administer a fiscally sound, self-supportive School Food Service Program across the district. In doing so it shall offer nutritious meals, as defined by the USDA, for breakfast and lunch at low and competitive pricing as set by the School Committee.

The Gloucester Public Schools utilizes a computerized Point of Service (POS) that assigns each student an account and tracks his/her sales. The Gloucester Public Schools recommends prepayment, and accepts prepayment.

The Gloucester Public Schools shall not deny any student a meal based upon a documented inability to pay (Free and Reduced Lunch).

While the USDA Child Nutrition Program does not require that a student who pays for regular priced meals be served a meal without payment, the Gloucester Public Schools will not deny a child a meal, and provides this policy as a courtesy to those students in the event that they forget or lose their lunch money.

The Gloucester Public Schools Food Service Program operates as a pay-as-you-go program. All student balances are expected to be kept current.

This policy will be posted on school websites. A printed copy will be sent home with each student at the start of the school year. Families who enroll during the school year will be given a copy at the time of registration.

II. Purpose

This policy is designed to ensure compliance with federal reporting requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program. It is intended to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances, as well as establish uniform meal account procedures throughout the Gloucester Public Schools.

The policy is predicated on the expectation that parents/guardians assume proper responsibility of student meal account payments.

The provisions of this policy pertain to regular school breakfast and lunch meals only.

III. Scope and Responsibility

The Food Service Department is responsible for maintaining records and alerting parents/guardians of a negative meal balance by way of regular email notification.

The School District is responsible for supporting the Food Service Department in assisting in the collection of unpaid funds.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for maintaining positive student meal balance accounts.

IV. Administration

Free Meal Benefit:

Free status students will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch each day. A la carte purchases (i.e. milk, bottled water, second meals and snack items), however, must be prepaid or paid for with cash at the time of service. Charging of a la carte items is not allowed.

Reduced Meal Benefit:

Reduced status students will be allowed to receive a breakfast and lunch each day at the current USDA rates. A la carte purchases (i.e. milk, bottled water, second meals and snack items) must be prepaid or paid for with cash at the time of service. A la carte purchases are not allowed until balance is paid (Note: This will only apply to O'Maley and GHS if we do the CEP).

Full Paid Lunch:

Students not eligible for free or reduced priced meals will pay for meals at the district's published standard rate each day. Prepayment of meals is strongly recommended as it speeds up meal service lines and allows more time for students to enjoy their meal. A la carte purchases (i.e. milk, bottled water, second meals and snack items) must be prepaid or paid for with cash at the time of service. A la carte purchases are not allowed until balance is paid (Note: This will only apply to O'Maley and GHS if we do the CEP).

Collection Procedures:

- A) Notices of deficit balances will be sent to parents/guardians by email at regular intervals during the school year. Monthly bills will be mailed to those for whom we do not have an email address on file.

- B) The meals served will be charged to the student's lunch account at the district's published price. Parents /guardians are responsible for payment of these meals to the Food Services Program.

Point of Sale System:

Students/Parents/Guardians pay for meals in advance via www.sendmoneytoschool.com or with a check payable to Gloucester School Food Service. Further details are available on our webpage at www.gloucesterschools.com. 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 will be carried over to the next school year.

Account Balances:

All school cafeterias possess computerized point of sale/cash register systems that maintain records of all monies deposited and spent for each student and said records are available by setting up an account at www.sendmoneytoschool.com or by speaking with the cafeteria

manager. All meal accounts are expected to be paid in full by the end of the given school year.

Unpaid Balances:

Unpaid student meal account balances will be identified as a financial obligation of the parents/guardians and remedied in accordance with the current practices observed by the school district. If balances remain unpaid, the superintendent reserves the right to take action such as filing with Small Claims Court, debt collection agencies, or the Department of Children and Families.

A Block on the Account:

A parent may contact the Food Service Director to place a block on their child's account to prohibit the purchase of a la carte items or set a dollar cap or daily spending limit.

Refunds:

For withdrawn students and/or graduating students, funds will be transferred to a sibling or family member remaining in the Gloucester Public School System. If there are no siblings or family members to transfer the funds to, a written request for a refund of any money remaining in their account must be submitted to the Food Service Director. An e-mail request is also acceptable.

Unclaimed Funds:

Refunds must be requested within one school year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the Gloucester Public School Food Service Program.

Payments Returned for Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF):

Parents/Guardians will be notified by letter or by email about non-sufficient funds, and that funds will be deducted from the student's account and a \$25.00 returned check fee will be applied.

Applying for School Meals:

If financial hardship exists, parents/guardians and families are encouraged to apply for free or reduced price lunches for their child. Applications may be submitted online at www.lunchapp.com or a paper copy may be picked up at the office at your child's school.

Students without a home meal or meal money:

If a student is without a home meal or meal money on a consistent basis, the administration will investigate the situation more closely and take further action as needed to act in the best interests of the child.

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP): Should the district enter into the Community Eligibility Provision, students enrolled in the participating will receive free breakfast and free lunch per CEP guidelines. A la carte purchases (i.e. milk, bottled water, second meals & snack items) must be prepaid or paid for with cash at the time of service. Charging of a la carte items is not allowed.

Non-Discrimination

The School Committee is committed to a policy of nondiscrimination in relation to race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, marital status, national origin, mental or physical disability, political belief or affiliation, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, and any other class of individuals protected from discrimination under state or federal law in any aspect of the access to, admission, or treatment of students in its programs and activities, or in employment and application for employment.

Approved by the School Committee on June 28, 2017