

BEACON CHARTER SCHOOLS MEAL CHARGE POLICY

Approved by Board of Directors 6.20.2018

I. PURPOSE/POLICY:

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures regarding notification of a student's parent/guardian in our high school and middle school regarding unpaid meal charges. **It is the policy of Beacon Charter Schools; at no time regardless of ability to pay or for any other reason will a student be denied a meal at Beacon Charter Schools.**

The goals of this policy are:

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

II. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

The Food Service Department: Responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the department manager of outstanding balances. The Food Service Department is also responsible for notifying the student's parent/guardian of low or outstanding balances.

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

The Parent/Guardian: Immediate payment.

III. ADMINISTRATION

1. Free and Reduced Lunch Students

- a. Free lunch status allows a child to receive a free breakfast and/or lunch every day. A la carte items are not part of the USDA program.
- b. Reduced Lunch Status Students: Reduced lunch status allows a child to receive reduced priced meals at a reduced amount determined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Nutrition, Health and Safety Programs.

Prior to written notification being sent to a student's parent/guardian a student will be allowed an outstanding account balance up to a maximum dollar equivalent of six (6) days of reduced priced meals (\$4.20), which will be known as the "account cap."

2. All Other Students:
 - a. Middle School Students: Prior to written notification being sent to a student's parent/guardian a student will be allowed an outstanding balance equal to a maximum dollar equivalent of three (3) meals, which will be known as the "account cap."
 1. These meals will include anything on the menu.
 2. Notices of low or deficit balances will be sent to parents/guardians at regular intervals during the school year.
 3. When the student reaches the "account cap" the parents/guardians will be notified.
 - b. High School Students: Prior to written notification being sent to a student's parent/guardian a student will be allowed an outstanding balance equal to a maximum dollar equivalent of \$10.00, which will be known as the "account cap."
3. **Balances Owed:** Collection of balances owed will follow the School's policies regarding student fees, fines, and charges and demand for payment. This will apply to any account balances which are equal to or in excess of the "account cap" at any time or after May 1 of the school year.
4. **Balances may be checked at any time by logging into PowerSchool, or by emailing the Food Service Manager.** All accounts must be settled by the end of the school year.
 - a. **Checks Returned for Non-Sufficient Funds (NSF):** When a check is returned to the Business Office for NSF, a letter will be sent to inform the parent/guardian. Payment for the NSF check must be in the form of cash, cashier's check or money order. Payment must be received within ten (10) days of the date of the letter, and must include the penalty amount incurred by the school. The amount of the check and the penalty fee will be deducted from the student's lunch account immediately upon notice from the bank and the above-mentioned rules will take effect.
 - b. **Balances Owed with No Response by Parent/Guardian:** If the payment is not received, the Superintendent or his designee may take one or more of the following actions, unless or until prohibited by state law or regulation:
 1. Delay the issuance of report cards, transfers, and class assignments until obligations are met.

2. Prohibit participation of the student or other students in the student's household from participating in any future fee-based program until or unless outstanding balances are resolved. However this is exclusive of the School's policy that no student regardless of ability to pay or for any other reason not being denied a meal.
 3. Prohibit student participation in senior activities, not including graduation exercises.
 4. For all students entering their senior year and all other lower classes all charges not paid before the end of the school year will be carried over to the next school year.
 5. Seniors must pay all charges before receiving their cap and gown.
 6. All seniors will receive a notice in May of any unused funds remaining in their meal account. They may elect to move money into a sibling's meal account or to elect to receive a refund. All refund requests will be sent to the Business Office.
 7. All school cafeterias possess a computerized point of sale/cash register system that maintains a record of all monies deposited and spent for each student, and said record is available to parents on PowerSchool. Parents will be informed that meals can be paid in advance and the balances maintained in their child's account to minimize the possibility that the child may be without meal money on any given day. If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the Food Service Department will investigate the situation more closely, including contacting the parent/guardian to bring money to the school and/or encouraging the parent to apply for free or reduced price meals.
5. **Blocks on Accounts: A parent may call the Business Office to place a block on their child's account to prohibit the purchase of a la carte items, or to set a dollar cap.**
6. **Refunds:**
- a. Withdrawn Students: For any student who has withdrawn, a written request for a refund of any money remaining in their account must be submitted. An e-mailed request is also acceptable.
 - b. Graduating Students: Students who are graduating at the end of the year will be given a refund. Funds can also be transferred to a sibling's account with a written request.

- c. Unclaimed **Funds**: All refunds must be requested within one year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of Beacon Charter School Corp.