

- () Required
(X) Local
() Notice

MEAL CHARGE AND PROHIBITION AGAINST MEAL SHAMING

I. PURPOSE

The goal of the Hicksville Union Free School District is to provide student access to nutritious low-cost meals each school day and to ensure that a pupil whose parent/guardian has unpaid school meal fees is not shamed or treated differently than a pupil whose parent/guardian does not have unpaid meal fees.

Unpaid meal charges place a large financial burden on the District. The purpose of this policy is to insure compliance with federal requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances to ensure that the student is not stigmatized, distressed or embarrassed. The provisions of this policy pertain to regular priced reimbursable school breakfast and lunch meals only. The Hicksville Union Free School District provides this policy as a courtesy to those students in the event that they forget or lose their money. Charging of items outside of the reimbursable meal (a la carte items, adult meals, etc.) is expressly prohibited.

II. POLICY

Free Meal Benefit eligible students will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch meal of their choice each day. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.

Reduced Meal Benefit eligible students will be allowed to receive a breakfast and/or lunch of their choice for a cost established by the Board of Education at the annual reorganization meeting. The charge meals offered to students will be reimbursable meals available to all students, unless the student's parent or guardian has specifically provided written permission to the school to withhold a meal. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.

Full Pay students will pay for meals of their choice at the District's published paid meal rate each day. The charge meals offered to students will be reimbursable meals available to all students, unless the student's parent or guardian has specifically provided written permission to the school to withhold a meal. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.

ONGOING STAFF TRAINING

- Staff will be trained annually and throughout the year as needed on the procedures for managing meal charges using the State Education Department (SED) Webinar
- Staff training includes ongoing eligibility certification for free or reduced price meals.

PARENT NOTIFICATION

- Parents/guardians will be notified that a student's meal card or account balance is exhausted and has accrued meal charges on a minimum of a monthly basis.

PARENT OUTREACH

- School staff will communicate with parents/guardians with five or more unpaid meal charges to determine eligibility for free or reduced price meals.
- School staff will contact the parent/guardian to offer assistance with the completion of a meal application to determine if there are other issues within the household causing the child to have insufficient funds, offering any other assistance that may be appropriate.

MINIMIZING STUDENT DISTRESS

- Staff will not publicly identify or stigmatize any student on the line for a meal or discuss any outstanding meal debt in the presence of any other students.
- Students who incur meal charges will not be required to wear a wristband or handstamp, or to do chores or work to pay for meals.
- Staff will not throw away a meal after it has been served because of the student's inability to pay for the meal or because of previous unpaid meal charges.
- Staff will not take any action directed at a pupil to collect unpaid school meal charges.
- Staff will deal directly with parents/guardians regarding unpaid school meal charges.

ONGOING ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

- School staff will conduct direct certification with NYSSIS or using NYSED Roster Upload at least monthly to maximize free eligibility.
- School staff will provide parents/guardians with free and reduced price application and instructions at the beginning of each school year in school enrollment packet.
- School staff will provide additional free and reduced price applications throughout the school year to families identified as owing meal charges.
- The District will use administrative prerogative judiciously to complete an application on a student's behalf only after using exhaustive efforts to obtain a completed application from the parent/guardian. The District will complete the application using available information on family size and income that falls within approvable guidelines.
- The District will coordinate with the foster, homeless, migrant, runaway coordinators at least monthly to certify eligible students.

Students/Parents/Guardians may pay for meals in advance via www.myschoolbucks.com or with a check payable to Hicksville Union Free School District Lunch Fund. Further details are available on our webpage at www.Hicksvillepublicschools.org. 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.

To obtain a refund for a withdrawn or graduating student, a written or e-mailed request for a refund of any money remaining in the student's account must be submitted. Students who are graduating at the end of the year will be given the option to transfer any remaining money to a sibling's account through a written request.

Unclaimed Funds must be requested within one school year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the Hicksville Union Free School District Food Service Program.

Adoption date: August 17, 2016

Revised: November 28, 2018