

1 **LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY**

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3 **MEAL CHARGE POLICY**

First Reading: January 5, 2010

Second Reading:

**Date Approved by
School Committee: 1/5/10 (Temporary Approval)**

Signature of Chair: _____

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13 **I. PURPOSE/POLICY:**

14 The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the
15 district. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the food service department. The goals
16 of this policy are:

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

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25 **II. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:**

26 The Food Service Department: Responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying
27 the school district of outstanding balances. The Food Service Department is also
28 responsible for notifying the student's parent/guardian of low or outstanding
29 balances.

30 The School District: Responsible for supporting the food service department in
31 collection activities.

32 The Parent/Guardian: Responsible for immediate payment.
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35 **III. ADMINISTRATION**

36 1) Free and Reduced Lunch Students

- 37 a) Free lunch status students will not be allowed to have a negative account balance.
38 Free lunch status allows a child to receive a free meal everyday. A la Carte items
39 are not part of the USDA program.
- 40 b) Reduced lunch status students will be allowed to have a negative account balance
41 up to a maximum dollar equivalent of six (6) reduced priced meals, which will be
42 known as the "account cap." Reduced lunch status allows a child to receive
43 reduced priced meals at \$0.40.

- 1 2) All Other Students:
- 2 a) Elementary students: will be allowed to charge up to a maximum dollar equivalent
- 3 of three (3) meals which will be known as the “account cap.”
- 4 (1) These meals will include anything on the menu.
- 5 (2) Notices of low or deficit balances will be sent to parents/guardians at regular
- 6 intervals during the school year.
- 7 (3) When the child reaches the “account cap,” they will only be offered a
- 8 designated menu alternate. Sample: Cheese sandwich + veggie sticks + fruit +
- 9 milk
- 10 (4) This designated menu alternate will be charged to the child’s lunch account at
- 11 the standard lunch rate. It will be reported as a meal to the state and federal
- 12 school lunch authorities and thus will be eligible for reimbursement.
- 13 Parents/guardians are responsible for payment of these meals to the food
- 14 service program.
- 15 (5) Once the child reaches the maximum meal charge, no a la carte items will be
- 16 sold to the child.
- 17 b) Middle school students: will be allowed to charge up to a maximum dollar
- 18 equivalent of two (2) meals which will be known as the “account cap.”
- 19 (1) These meals will include anything on the menu.
- 20 (2) Notices of low or deficit balances will be send to parents/guardians at regular
- 21 intervals during the school year.
- 22 (3) When the child reaches the “account cap,” they will only be offered a
- 23 designated menu alternate. Sample: Cheese sandwich + veggie sticks + fruit +
- 24 milk
- 25 (4) This designated menu alternate will be charged to the child’s lunch account at
- 26 the standard lunch rate. It will be reported as a meal to the state and federal
- 27 school lunch authorities and thus will be eligible for reimbursement.
- 28 Parents/guardians are responsible for payment of these meals to the food
- 29 service program.
- 30 (5) Once the child reaches the maximum meal charge, no a la carte items will be
- 31 sold to the child.
- 32 c) High school students: will not be allowed to charge any school meals causing their
- 33 school lunch account to go into a deficit balance.
- 34 3) Any payments made by check that are returned to the district by the bank with notice of
- 35 “insufficient funds” will require a penalty fee of \$25.00 by party writing the check
- 36 (M.G.L Chapter 60, Section 57A). The penalty fee will be made payable to the Town
- 37 of Lexington and sent to the Food Service office. The penalty fee and the amount of the
- 38 check will be deducted from the child/children’s lunch account immediately upon
- 39 notice from the bank and the above mentioned rules will take effect.

- 1 4) At the first of May, the food service program must begin to close the books for the
2 school year. As a result the point of sale system will be blocked from accepting deficit
3 account balances including the account cap limits.
- 4 i) Parents/guardians will be sent a written request for "Payment in Full." (The deposit
5 requests will be mailed home.)
- 6 (1) Students who forget money or have a zero balance will only be offered a
7 designated menu alternate. Sample: Cheese sandwich + veggie sticks + fruit +
8 milk
- 9 (2) This designated menu alternate will be charged to the child's lunch account at
10 the standard lunch rate. It will be reported as a meal to the state and federal
11 school lunch authorities and thus will be eligible for reimbursement.
12 Parents/guardians are responsible for payment of these meals to the food
13 service program.
- 14 ii) All charges not paid before the end of the school year will be carried forward into
15 the next school year.
- 16 iii) Seniors must pay all charges before receiving their cap and gown.
- 17 iv) All seniors will receive a notice in May of remaining money in their lunch account.
18 They will receive a letter to elect to move money into a sibling lunch account or to
19 elect a refund. All refund requests will be sent to the food service office and then
20 forwarded to the business office for payment.
- 21 5) All school cafeterias possess computerized point of sale/cash register systems that
22 maintain a record of all monies deposited and spent for each student and said record
23 will be made available to the parent upon request. The Food Service Program or the
24 School District's food service management company shall inform parents that meals
25 can be paid for in advance and the balances maintained in their child's account to
26 minimize the possibility that the child may be without meal money on any given day.
27 If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the Business Office will
28 investigate the situation more closely, including contacting the parent/guardian to bring
29 money to the school and/or encouraging the parent to apply for free or reduced price
30 meals.

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34 Legal Reference: 7 CFR 210, Office of Management and Budget Circular A-87