

## SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM AND MEAL CHARGE POLICY

### I. Statement of Policy

- A. The District participates in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) and to operate the District's program within the requirements of the federal and state regulations and guidelines applicable to the programs.
- B. The District shall apply for funding under the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) for each school year for which CEP is available and the District meets the eligibility criteria.
  - 1. If the District receives funding pursuant to CEP then meals will be provided to all students without cost to the student, consistent with all regulations applicable to CEP and the amount of funding received. Records shall be maintained in the form necessary to ensure the District's compliance and continued eligibility.
  - 2. If the District does not receive CEP funding for a particular school year, free and reduced price meals shall be provided to students in accordance with this Policy, as set forth below.
- C. To extend the benefit of the program to all eligible students, the District will communicate to families the eligibility for free and reduced meals, the procedures for applying and the district's policies and procedures regarding meal charges set forth in this Policy.
- D. The District's food service program shall be managed so that the nonprofit school food service account does not operate at a deficit, and so that subsidies from the general fund are limited.

### II. Eligibility for Free and Reduced Meals

- A. At the beginning of each year, information letters shall be sent to households of children attending the school to inform families about the Child Nutrition Programs and that free or reduced price meals or free milk may be available to children, and the procedures for applying for enrollment in the program.
- B. The letters may be distributed by the mail, e-mailed to the parent or guardian, or included in information packets provided to students.
- C. A household may apply for benefits at any time during the school year.

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- D. Only one application is required for all children in the household.
- E. No application is necessary if the household was notified by the District that all children have been directly certified. If the household is not sure if their children have been directly certified, they should contact the Food Service Director.
- F. A student's eligibility status for free and reduced meals shall carryover into the next school year for the first thirty (30) operating days or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever occurs first.
- G. A student that transfers from a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) or Provision 2 (P2) participating school to a non-participating school shall be deemed eligible for free and reduced price meal benefits for thirty (30) operating days or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever occurs first.

### III. Meal Payments and Deferred Payments (Meal Charge)

- A. Students may charge meals in accordance with the following rules:
  - 1. Students are expected to pay for meals at the school's published meal rate each day. Families are expected to maintain funds in accounts to minimize the possibility that a child may be without meal money on any given day.
  - 2. Students may charge complete reimbursable meals only.
  - 3. All students will be provided with meal charge opportunities pursuant to this policy, regardless of whether they receive full price, reduced price, or free meals.
  - 4. When the balance on MySchoolBucks is exhausted the District will provide the student with the student's meal of choice of the available reimbursable meal choices for that school day, if the student requests one, unless the student's parent or guardian has specifically provided written permission to withhold a meal.
  - 5. No student with a negative meal card or MySchoolBucks account balance will be allowed to charge any a la carte items, including snacks, extras, or beverages.
- B. The District is committed to ensuring that federal reimbursements, children's payments and other non-designated nonprofit food service revenues do not subsidize meals for adults. Adults are required to pay for meals in full at the time of purchase.

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#### IV. Communication of Policy to Families, Students, and Staff

- A. The District will communicate this policy to parents/guardians in writing at the start of each school year and upon enrollment during the school year through the student handbook, newsletter, and/or website.
- B. The District will provide this policy to all school staff responsible for enforcement, including but not limited to, school food service professionals for collecting payment for meals at the point of service, staff involved in notifying families of low or negative balances, school social workers, school nurses, the homeless liaison, other staff members assisting children in need (or who may be contacted by families with unpaid meal charges), and any staff involved in enforcing any other aspects of this policy.

#### V. Nonprofit School Food Service Account

- A. When outstanding student charges accrue \$10 resulting from nonpayment for school meals a letter and this Policy will be forwarded by mail or email from the School Lunch Director or calls or text messages using School Messenger, notifying the parent/guardian of the insufficient account balance. This notification may include a repayment schedule for unpaid meal charges.
- B. Outstanding student charges (also called delinquent debt) resulting from nonpayment for school meals are not an allowable cost to the nonprofit school food service account and cannot be absorbed by that account at the end of the school year or carried forward to the next school year. The district will therefore subsidize the nonprofit school food service account for all unpaid meals by June 30<sup>th</sup> of each school year using non-federal funds. However, the District reserves the right to continue debt collection efforts into the next school year.

#### VI. Breakfast Program

- A. When a District school is identified by the State Education Department as meeting the threshold that seventy percent or more of the students attending the school qualify for free or reduced price lunch meals, the District shall provide a breakfast program at that school in compliance with state law; provided that, if the Superintendent, in consultation with the School Lunch Director, determines that the District meets the requirements for a waiver of this requirement, then the Superintendent may apply to the Commissioner of Education for such a waiver.

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- B. When the District provides a mandated breakfast program, the Superintendent shall determine the service delivery model that best suits District students, after consulting with teachers, parents, students, and members of the community. Notice will be provided to parents and guardians of students at the affected school that the District will be providing breakfast after the start of the instructional day and the service delivery model being implemented.

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Holland Patent Central School District

Legal Ref: 7 CFR 210.12, 245.5 and 245.6(d); 15 USC 1692a; 42 USC 1758(b)(2)(A); Education Law §908; Ch. 537 of the Laws of 1976 as amended by Ch. 56 of the Laws of 2018; May 2006 Memo from SED's Frances N. O'Donnell to Food Service Directors/Managers; August 2005 Memo from USDA titled "*Establishing A Meal Charge Policy*"; July 8, 2016 Memo from USDA titled "*Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments*", May 1, 2018 Memo from SED titled "*New York State Legislation – Prohibition Against Meal Shaming*."

Adopted: 08/16/17

Revised: 10/25/17, 09/12/18