

April 5, 2017

The North Middlesex Regional School District School Committee places the following policy on the table for public review. Should you wish to make a comment on the policy, please email your comments to: info@nmrsd.org

Thank you.

EFCD Meal Charge Policy

MEAL CHARGE POLICY

The North Middlesex Regional School District School Committee recognizes that a healthy, nutritious meal plays an important role in the readiness and ability of students to learn. The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent policy regarding meal account procedures while treating all students with dignity in the serving line.

Although the school food program is being managed by an outside company, all the money owed to this program is owed to the school district. Deficits in the program must be covered by the general school budget.

Methods of Payment

The North Middlesex Regional School District can accept payment for meals upon purchase in the form of cash or check at the register, or via the school meal on-line payment system. Meals may be prepaid using any of these methods. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to make payments on-line and to register for low balance alerts.

A minimum balance equivalent to five (5) school meals is recommended for those who participate in the food service program.

A parent/guardian may request that the following restrictions be placed on their student's account:

1. No a la carte purchases.
2. No negative charges allowed.
3. Establish a monetary limit of a la carte purchases by meal.
4. Turn student account off.

Administration of Policy

The school district is responsible for ensuring that all accounts, including the food service revolving account, are properly managed and accurately reported. The school district works closely with the Food Service Management Company to monitor students' meal accounts with the goal of eliminating negative balances. Parents/guardians who have signed up on-line for low balance alerts are notified when the account is running low and needs to be replenished.

In the event of insufficient funds the following will be allowed:

1. Elementary School
 - a. Free lunch status students will not be allowed to have a negative account balance.
 - b. All other students (including reduced lunch status) will be allowed to charge the equivalent of 3 reimbursable lunches. A la carte items may not be charged.
 - c. Upon the 4th charged meal, an alternate reimbursable meal will be served and charged.
 - d. Cash purchases will be honored.
2. Middle School
 - a. Free lunch status students will not be allowed to have a negative balance.
 - b. All other students (including reduced lunch status) will be allowed to charge the equivalent of 2 reimbursable lunches. A la carte items may not be charged.
 - c. Upon the 3rd charged meal, an alternate reimbursable meal will be served and charged.
 - d. Cash purchases will be honored.
3. High School
 - a. Free lunch status students will not be allowed to have a negative balance.

- b. All other students (including reduced lunch status) will be allowed to charge the equivalent of 1 reimbursable lunch. A la carte items may not be charged.
- c. After a negative balance of 1 meal is reached only cash purchases will be allowed until the balance is positive again.
- d. Cash purchases will be honored.

Account Management

On a weekly basis, the Food Service Director will generate a charge balance report from the Point of Sale (POS) system. The Director will flag all accounts that are nearing a zero balance or have gone into the negative. A student list, sorted by school, will be sent to the principals.

When a student reaches the point of receiving alternate meals the principal or designee will attempt to contact the parent/guardian by phone, email or a letter sent home. The purpose of the contact is to inform the parent/ guardian of the negative balance and to offer assistance if needed. The principal or designee may offer to help fill out a free/reduced lunch application, refer the parent/guardian to the business office for a payment plan, or other assistance as deemed appropriate.

Should the parent/guardian not be responsive to the contact and continues to fail to bring the account back into good standing within 1 month (or before May 1st in the year of graduation), the principal may remove the student from participation in the food service program. Once removed from the program, if the student is not being provided lunch from home, the principal will notify the superintendent and may call in appropriate state agencies.

If the balance exceeds fifty dollars (\$50.00), the following action may be taken (unless prohibited by state law or regulation):

- Prohibited participation of the student in any future fee-based program (field trips, user-fee based programs, etc.) until or unless outstanding balances are resolved.

For students who qualify for free or reduced lunch, accounts will be processed in accordance with federal regulations.

A positive balance will remain on account to be used in the following school year unless the account holder requests that the positive balance be moved to a sibling's account or returned to account holder.

When the student leaves the district, the business office or their designee will notify the account holder of their end-of-year balance and all reasonable efforts will be made by the District to return the money to the account holder.

LEGAL REFS:

Child Nutrition Action of 1966

CROSS REF:

EFC