

Oceanside Union Free School District
Policies of the Board of Education

POLICY # 6703.2: MEAL CHARGE AND PROHIBITION AGAINST MEAL SHAMING POLICY

The goal of the Oceanside UFSD is to provide student access to nutritious no, or low-cost meals, each school day. However, unpaid charges place a large financial burden on the District. The purpose of this procedure is to establish procedures to address unpaid meal charges without shaming its students throughout the Oceanside UFSD and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances. The provisions of this procedure pertain to school breakfast and lunch meals only. Charging of items outside of the reimbursable meals (a la carte items, adult meals, etc.) is expressly prohibited.

Free and Reduced Program

- Free or reduced price meals may be allowed for qualifying students attending District schools upon receipt of a written application from the student's parent or guardian or a "Direct Certification" letter from the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). Applications will be provided by the District to all families.
- School officials must also determine eligibility for free/ or reduced meals and milk by using the Direct Certification Matching Process, a dataset supplied by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, and made available by the SED. Any student receiving federal assistance through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is automatically eligible for free meals and milk. There is no need for families to complete further applications. The District will notify parents or guardians of eligibility, giving them the opportunity to decline free meals and milk if they so choose.
- Procedures for the administration of the free and reduced price meal program of this District will be the same as those prescribed in current state and federal laws and regulations.
- **Free Meal Benefit** - Free eligible students will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch each day. A la carte purchases must be paid/prepaid.
- **Reduced Meal Benefit at all levels** - Reduced eligible students will be allowed to receive a breakfast for \$.25 and lunch for \$.25 each day. A student will be permitted to charge meals to their account if their prepaid balance reaches zero or they are without funds for whatever reason. See "Meal Charging" for additional information.
- If a school or school district becomes aware that a student who has not submitted a meal application is eligible for free or reduced-fee meals, the school or school district shall complete and file an application for the student pursuant to title seven, section 245.6(d) of the code of federal regulations.
- School liaisons required for homeless, foster, and migrant students shall coordinate with the food services department to make sure such students receive free school meals, in accordance with federal law.

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Meal Charging

- **Reduced Meal Benefit and Full Pay Students** - Students will pay for meals at the school's published paid meal rate each day. In the event, a student does not have money for the day to purchase a meal, a cashier at the school will enter a charge into the computerized point-of-sale system. The charge meals offered to students will be reimbursable meals that are available to all students. The school district shall provide the student with the student's meal of choice for that school day of the available reimbursable meal choices for such school day, if the student requests one, unless the student's parent or guardian has specifically provided written permission to the school to withhold a meal, provided that the school or school district shall only be required to provide access to reimbursable meals, not a la carte items, adult meals, or other similar items.
- If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis and charges five (5) or more meals, the food services department will contact the school building to investigate the situation more closely and take further action as needed. If financial hardship exists, social workers will contact parents and families to encourage them to apply for free or reduced-price lunches for their child if applicable.

Staff Training

- Building Principals, working with the head of food services, shall ensure that all district and food service staff with responsibilities under this policy will be trained on the provisions of this policy and the requirements of Education Law section 908.

Computerized Point-of-Sale (POS)/Cash Register Systems

- All school cafeterias possess computerized point of sale/cash register systems that maintain record of all monies deposited and spent for each student and said records are available by setting up an account. More information can be found on the District's website under FOOD SERVICES by visiting the following web address: <http://www.oceansideschools.org/common/HOW%20TO%20CREATE%20YOUR%20MYSCHOOLBUCKS%20ACCOUNT%20.pdf>.
- Students/Parents/Guardians may pay for meals in advance via: <https://www.myschoolbucks.com/ver2/login/getmain?requestAction=home> or with a check made payable to Oceanside UFSD. Further details are available on our webpage at <http://www.oceansideschools.org/> under FOOD SERVICES. Funds should be maintained in pre-paid accounts to minimize the possibility that a student may be without meal money on any given day. Any remaining funds for a particular student may/will be carried over to the next school year.

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- The additional benefit of utilizing a computerized point-of-sale system is that student balances, either positive or negative, are only viewed by the cafeteria's cashier which was designed to decrease student distress and/or embarrassment.

Parent/Guardian Notification and Accrued Balances

- Notices of deficit balances will be communicated to parents/guardians (not students) during the school year weekly by automated telephone messages and/or mailings.
- Collection of owed balances will follow the policies and procedures set by each school. These include informing parents/guardians of making online payments via the District's point-of-sale system or issuing a check made payable to the Oceanside UFSD.

Minimizing Student Distress:

- School will not publicly identify or stigmatize any student on the line 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. Schools 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 meal charges. Schools will not take any action directed at a pupil to collect unpaid school meal fees. Schools will deal directly with parents/guardians regarding unpaid school meal fees.

Other

- Refunds for withdrawn, and graduating students; a written or e-mailed request for a refund of any money remaining in their account must be submitted. Students who are graduating at the end of the year will be given the option to transfer to a sibling's account with a written request. Unclaimed Funds must be requested within one school year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the Oceanside UFSD Food Service Program.

Adopted: 12/20/2017

Revised: 6/13/2018

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