

OYSTER RIVER COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD	Policy Code: EFAA
Draft to Policy Committee: September 13, 2017& 10/11/17 Re-review by Policy Committee: March 14, 2018 School Board First Read: March 21, 2018 School Board Second Read/Adoption: April 4, 2018	Page 1 of 3 Category: Priority

Payment for School Meals

The Oyster River Cooperative School District provides the opportunity to purchase breakfast, snacks, lunch and other items from the school cafeteria. Each meal meets or exceeds the federal nutrition standards.

The school lunch program is required by federal law to operate as a non-profit which must end each fiscal year without a negative balance. Uncollected debt must be paid to the school meals program from other funds. Therefore, parents of students required to pay the full or reduced price for meals must ensure that the school meals program is paid for their student's meals. The District's policy is to quickly escalate efforts to bring student meal accounts into positive balance, to avoid circumstances where these accounts build significant debt.

Student Meal Accounts

The District uses a point-of-sale computerized meal payment system which has an account for all students. Parents of students who will be purchasing meals using this system are required to establish and maintain a positive balance in the student's meal account.

Funds may be deposited into a student meals account by cash, check, or on-line payment. Cash or checks made out to: Oyster River Child Nutrition or ORCN should be presented to the Cashier at the cafeteria. Payment is expected no later than when the meal is served. A check may also be mailed to the ORCSD District's Child Nutrition Office attention Doris Demers, 33 Coe Drive, Durham, NH 03824. The District also utilizes the services of MealMagic.com. Funds can also be deposited into an established student meals account through www.sendmoneytoschools.com as an electronic transaction. The use of checks or on-line payments is encouraged, as each provides a record.

A fee of \$10.00 will be charged to the parents for each check returned for insufficient funds.

Balance Statements

The District will work proactively with parents to maintain a positive balance in their student's meal account. The Child Nutrition Director has established a procedure at each school requiring that a low balance statement be sent to parents whenever the balance in a student's meal account falls to or below a set amount that approximates the amount typically necessary to pay for one week of meals.

The District encourages parents to monitor the student's use of the meal account to ensure that a sufficient balance is available at all times for their student to charge meals.

Each low-balance notice to parents will include information on how to verify a student meals account balance, how to resolve concerns regarding the accuracy of the account balance, or to obtain information on the school meals program, including the name, title, hours when available, phone number, and e-mail address of an appropriate member of the District staff. These notices will be sent via e-mail.

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The District's policy is to ensure that students have access to healthy meals and that no student will be subject to different treatment from the standard school meal or school cafeteria procedures. Therefore, the District will allow students in Grade K-4 to purchase a meal, even if the student's meal account has insufficient funds. This policy applies to all meal offerings generally available at the cafeteria for breakfast and lunch. Middle and high school principals have set funds aside for students that do not have money on their accounts, to borrow for the day.

Students Without Cash in Hand or A Positive Account Balance

When a student does not have money to pay for a meal or has a negative balance in the student meals account, a student requesting a meal shall be provided with a meal from among the choices available to K-4 students. The same will be provided for middle and high school students. However, students will be required to visit the school office or nurse's office to borrow funds. The only exception will be where the student's parents have provided the District with specific written direction that the student is not partaking in the school meals program. When parents chose to provide meals sent from home, it is the parents' responsibility to explain to their student the necessity of the student not using the school meals program.

If the student's meal account debt accumulates to \$25.00 or more, the parents will be requested to meet with the principal. When appropriate, the principal in conjunction with the Child Nutrition Director should explore with the parents whether an application for free or reduced cost meals is warranted. Where extenuating circumstances of financial hardship exist, and the family is not eligible for free or reduced cost meals, the District will work with the parents to identify and engage governmental and private charitable resources which are available to assist the family.

If a student with a negative balance in his or her meal account seeks to purchase a meal with cash or check, the student will be allowed to do so. There is no requirement that the funds be applied first to the debt. However, a la carte snack purchases are not allowed with a negative account balance.

Unresolved Debt

If parents fail to provide the student with a meal sent from home, continue to fail to provide funds for their student to use the school meals program, continue to refuse to cooperate with reasonable requests by District staff to address the overdue debt, the Child Nutrition Director, acting in the best interest of the District, will notify the Business Administrator to determine if additional action is needed to pursue collection of the outstanding debt.

The Superintendent shall try to identify non-profit charities that are willing to contribute funds to the district to assist in keeping a positive balance in the meal account of students whose parents do not qualify for free meals and who due to financial hardship are unable to consistently keep the student meals account in a positive balance. If at the end of the fiscal year uncollected debt in student meal accounts must, as a last resort to fulfill federal requirements, be paid to the school meals program from other District funds, the parents' debt for unpaid meal charges shall be owed to the District. Applying the policy set forth above, the Superintendent shall determine if further collection efforts are in the best interest of the District. Any payments collected on debt that has been offset with District funds, shall be credited to the District.

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Staff Enforcement of Policy/Training

A copy of this policy and refresher training shall be provided annually to all child nutrition and school staff responsible for serving student meals or enforcing this policy. New staff with these responsibilities shall be provided with a written copy of the policy and training on the policy during their initial training or orientation. In accordance with federal requirements, a record shall be maintained documenting that new staff receive the policy and training. The record must also document that all applicable staff receive a copy of the policy and refresher training annually.

Legal References

15 U.S.C. § 1692-1695 federal Fair Debt Collection Practices Act (FDCPA)
42 U.S.C. 1758(b)(6), Use or disclosure of information
Civil Rights Act of 1964 & 7 C.F.R. Part 15, Subpart A & B
2 C.F.R. §200.426
7 C.F.R §210.09, 210.10, 210.15, 245.5
RSA 169-C:29-31
RSA 189:11-a
RSA 358-C New Hampshire's Unfair, Deceptive or Unreasonable Collection Practices Act;
NH Dept. of Education Technical Advisory - Food and Nutrition Programs

Cross Reference:

JLCF – Wellness
EFA- Availability and Distribution of Healthy Foods
EFC – Free and Reduced-Price Meals