

501 – Meal Charge Policy

Policy Statement:

Free Meal Benefit - Free status students will be allowed to receive one free breakfast and lunch each day.

Reduced Meal Benefit - Reduced status students will be allowed to receive one free breakfast and lunch each day.

Full Pay Students – Full status students will be allowed to receive a breakfast and lunch for the School’s published first meal standard rate each day.

Second Meal – Any student or person who wishes to purchase a second meal will be charged School’s published second meal standard rate.

Staff – Staff will pay for meals at the standard adult rate. As a courtesy staff may charge up to \$25.00 to their meal account, charges in excess of \$25.00 will not be allowed. Staff will receive periodic invoices of meal balance and is expected to pay any balance owed within 30 days of charge. If a staff member leaves employment with the School any outstanding balance will be withheld from the employee’s last paycheck unless other payment arrangements are made.

High School Students - Students are encouraged to prepay or pay cash for all meals. As a courtesy the School will allow students to charge on their meal account for reimburseable meals only. A la carte and second meals must be paid at time of purchase.

Parents/Guardians – Are responsible for meal payment to the food service program. Notices of low or deficit balances will be sent to parents/guardians at regular intervals during the school year.

Tracking - The School will have designated staff in attendance at each meal time to monitor and track meals served. The School will maintain manual tracking of all meals served, as well as, keep physical copies of the daily tracked meals served lists. Records of all monies deposited and spent for each student and said records are available by request. Requests can be sent to the School or by contacting the Food Service Director.

Students/Parents/Guardians/Staff – can pay for meals in advance online at www.myschoolbucks.com or with cash or check payable to Maine Arts Academy. The School also accepts Visa, MasterCard, Discover, and American Express. Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a student may be without meal money on any given day. Any remaining funds for a particular student will be carried over to the next school year. All balance deficits must be paid by the end of the school year.

Refunds - for withdrawn and graduating students; a written request for a refund of any money remaining in their account must be submitted. An e-mail request is also acceptable.

Unclaimed Funds - must be requested within one school year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the School's Food Service Program.

Reason for Policy:

The goal of the School is to provide students and staff with healthy meals each day. However, unpaid charges place a large financial burden on our Food Services Department. The purpose of this policy is to insure compliance with federal reporting requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program, and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student and staff meal balances.

Exclusions:

If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the Guidance Office and Principal will investigate the situation, including contacting the parent/guardian to bring money to the school and/or encouraging the parent to apply for free or reduced price meals. If the situation continues the Principal will report it to the Superintendent for further investigation.

Blocks on Accounts: A parent may place a block on their child's account to prohibit the purchase of meals By providing written instructions to the school only. Verbal communication is not accepted.

Procedures:

Scope of Responsibility:

- **The Food Service Program:** Responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the School District (School Principals and Chief Financial Officer) of outstanding balances. The Food Service Department is also responsible for notifying the student's parent/guardian of outstanding balances.
- **The School:** Responsible for supporting the Food Service Department in collection activities.
- **The Parent/Guardian:** Responsible for keeping their students' account paid up to date.

Balances Owed:

- **Invoicing:**
 - The Food Service Director will send out invoices of account balances on regular intervals throughout the school year.
 - Students will only be informed of insufficient funds upon request.
 - No student will be denied a reimburseable meal regardless of their account balance.

Staff/Students/Parents/Guardians may request their balance at any time.

- **Checks returned for non-sufficient funds "NSF":**

When a check is returned to the Business Office for "NSF", a phone call to inform the parent/guardian of the "NSF" is made along with any fees charged by the bank plus the amount of the check will be owed. Payment must be made within (10) days of the call to

the Business Office. When the NSF notice is received, the Food Service Director will deduct the check amount from the student's account.

- **Balances owed with no response from parent/guardian:**

If the amount owed is not received, the Superintendent or his/her designee will take one or more of the following actions:

- 1) Referral to small claims court and/or District Attorney's Office.
- 2) Utilize a collection agency to assist in collecting outstanding balances.

Fiscal Year End:

At the end of May, the Food Service Department must begin the process of closing out the fiscal year and reconciling all accounts with the Business Office. As a result the following will take place:

- 1) Parents/Guardians will be mailed a written request for "payment in full".
- 2) .

All charges not paid before the end of the school year must be dealt with through the General Fund budget, pursuant to USDA federal regulations and School policy. This burdens the general fund budget and affects its ability to fund teachers, instructional supplies, and other expenditures necessary to operate the school district.

Forms and Instructions:

Application for Free and Reduced Meals can be requested from the School or online at <https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/nutrition/studenteligibility>.

Additional Information:

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the Agency ere they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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The Maine Human Rights Act prohibits discrimination because of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, religion, ancestry or national origin.

If you wish to file a discrimination complaint electronically, please select File a Complaint and complete an intake questionnaire. Before completing this process it may be helpful to review relevant links under Guidance. If you are not sure how the Maine Human Rights Act may apply to, you please review the publication "What It Is! How It Works!". Maine is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

History:

Adopted: May 1, 2019

Revisions Adopted: November 6, 2019