

WINDHAM SOUTHWEST SUPERVISORY UNION

Meal Charge Policy/Procedure

Purpose - The purpose of this policy/procedure is to establish consistent procedures for Windham Southwest Supervisory Union to provide meals to students who have insufficient funds in their school meal accounts and the collection of unpaid meal debt.

General Statement –

- A. Our mission, as an extension of the educational programs of the school district, is dedicated to the improvement of the health of students by providing flavorful and nutritious meals at an affordable cost, to provide service to the school, to enhance the educational environment, and have a positive impact on the community.
- B. The Windham Southwest Supervisory Union recognizes proper nutrition is essential for adequate learning to occur and to establish lifelong, healthy eating habits while also working to maintain the financial integrity of the school food service program.
- C. It is the policy of Windham Southwest Supervisory Union to offer high quality, healthy breakfasts and lunches that meet the federal guidelines to all students at a reasonable cost to ensure no child goes hungry.
- D. Payments to student accounts are made by check or cash at each school's front office.
- E. Families may apply for free and reduced-price meals at any time during the school year. Meal applications are distributed to households as a part of the Welcome Packet at the beginning of each school year. Parents are encouraged to complete and return the applications as soon as possible. In addition, applications are available at the school office during regular business hours and online at <http://www.windhamsw.k12.vt.us/>. If household size changes or income changes, families may re-apply for meal benefits any time during the school year.
 - 1) Households who apply for free and reduced-price meal benefits are responsible for payment of all school meals and accumulated charges until approval is granted. Federal guidelines allow a maximum of 10 days to approve a new application. No child is allowed a free or reduced price meal without an approved application or direct certification information on file. Parents will receive a notification letter of the student's eligibility showing the effective date. If a notification letter is not received within 10 days, the parent should check with the approving official at the school to see if the application has been received.
 - 2) Households who are receiving 3SquaresVT or Reach-Up benefits will receive a notification of eligibility letter based on Direct Certification from the school if the school has received information about your child(ren). If your household receives these benefits and you have not received this letter from the school, the school has not received information regarding eligibility of your child(ren), the household must contact the school immediately to provide current information.
 - 3) Free and reduced-price eligible students may receive a breakfast and a lunch each day at no charge or a reduced fee.
 - 4) Students with an overdrawn account are not allowed to charge a la carte items, such as a separate carton of milk or a second entrée.

Meal Charge Procedure –

- A. If the student account has insufficient funds to pay for breakfast and/or lunch meals

Grades K-8

- When a student's food account balance falls below \$5.00 the student will be given a note to remind the family to deposit more money into the food account. The child will receive another reminder note to take home when their balance is negative \$5.00. When a child's lunch account balance falls below negative \$20.00 a letter will be mailed home with the present account balance. When a child's lunch account reaches negative \$25.00 another letter will be mailed home along with the necessary paperwork to receive free/reduced meals. If at any time the parents contact the school and explain hardship it will be at the discretion of the Principal as to handle that specific case.

Grades 9-12

- When a student's food account balance falls below \$10.00 they will be given a note to remind the family to deposit more money into the food account. Students are not allowed to charge meals or ala carte items if a purchase would result in a negative balance on their account.
 - Students in elementary school will always be provided a meal.
 - All negative balances must be paid prior to the end of the school year. Any remaining balances will be carried over to the next school year.
- B. Free and reduced-price eligible students will always be provided a meal regardless of unpaid student accounts.
- C. A student eligible for paid meals who has 'cash in hand' at the time of meal service will be provided a meal regardless of unpaid student accounts. The 'cash in hand' will not be applied to past due accounts.
- D. Students with an overdrawn account are not allowed to charge a la carte items.

Account Status Notifications –

Households are strongly encouraged to keep sufficient funds in the student accounts to cover weekly meal purchases. The student's school will notify each household of account balances by:

- Families may contact the school secretary at anytime to find out what their lunch balance is.

Collection of Unpaid Meal Debt –

When the student balance is negative fifty dollars, the following collection activities will be followed:

- The building principal will contact the household to discuss the requirement of the family to provide meals for the student.
- The building principal may contact the local social services office if the household refuses to provide meals or pay for student meals.
- A certified letter will be sent to the household notifying them that the debt will be turned over to a collection agency if not paid by June 1.
- Checks returned with non-sufficient funds will follow the district's policy.

First Reading and Approval: July, 26, 2017

Second Reading and Adoption: August 30, 2017