

# **Lincoln Park Public Schools Food Service Department**

## **MEAL CHARGING GUIDELINES**

The purpose of establishing **Meal Charging Guidelines** is to establish consistent and clear meal account procedures throughout the District.

### **Goals:**

- To ensure that students have a healthy meal and that no child goes hungry
- To treat all students with dignity and confidentiality in the serving line
- To foster clear, positive communication among staff, administrators, teachers, students, and parents/guardians
- To establish fair practices that can be used consistently throughout the District regarding meal charges and collection
- To encourage parents/guardians to assume the responsibility of meal payments when required and to demonstrate accountability to their child/student

### **Scope of Responsibility:**

Food Service Department: Responsible for maintaining meal account records, providing letters and making phone calls to parents/guardians regarding low balance accounts, and working with school administration and parents/guardians toward a reasonable resolution on overdrawn accounts.

School Administration: Responsible for working with the Food Service department and parents/guardians toward a reasonable resolution on overdrawn accounts.

Parent/Guardian: Responsible for working with the Food Service department and school administration to arrange for payment or apply for free & reduced lunch benefits.

### **Meal Accounts:**

We discourage meal charges, but understand that an occasional emergency or forgetfulness may make it necessary. Meal charges are a temporary solution and are not intended to address broader issues of a parent/guardian's inability to pay for a meal for his/her child. In those instances, an Application for Free or Reduced Meal Benefits should be completed.

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to make meal payments in advance. Personal checks and cash deposits are accepted daily at the point of sale. For convenience, payments may also be made by credit/debit card after setting up an account for the student at [www.mypaymentsplus.com](http://www.mypaymentsplus.com). Parents/Guardians may view their student's lunch account at any time, regardless of pay status (free/reduced/full pay).

## **Meal Charging:**

The following guidelines apply to meal charging and collections.

- After three unpaid meals, students may receive an alternate meal.
- Only reimbursable meals may be charged. No ala carte purchases may be charged.
- Students are not permitted to purchase ala carte items with cash if they owe any unpaid charges. The cashier will notify the student that he/she cannot purchase the items and instruct the student to have their parent/guardian contact the Food Service department.
- All unpaid charges will be added to the list of outstanding fees or unpaid fines at the end of the school year. Payment must be made in full or student participation in school activities may be denied.
- Contact with parents/guardians will begin after the grace period for submitting Free or Reduced Meal Applications has passed.
- Lunchroom cashiers will verbally notify students at the register at the MS and HS when their meal account balance reaches the value of two equivalent lunches or less.
- On Tuesdays, a robocall will be placed to all parents/guardians whose student's account balance is negative at that time.
- For elementary students, a letter will be sent home with the student when charging occurs.
- The food service department will place phone calls to parents/guardians when students continue charging meals.
- If the balance is not paid, the Food Service department and school administration will work with the parent/guardian using all reasonable means to obtain payment or to complete a Free or Reduced Meal Application. This may include turning the account over to a collection agency or denying the student participation in school activities. Since every situation is unique, there is not a "one size fits all" guideline. Each situation will need to be assessed on a case by case basis.