

Williamsport Area School District – Meal Charge Policy 808.1

First Reading Approved December 3, 2019

Purpose:

Williamsport Area School District is dedicated to providing all students in attendance a high quality education including access to nutritious meals during the school year. The goal is to provide access to a nutritious breakfast and lunch at a reasonable cost. As a District, we have worked diligently to maintain low breakfast and lunch prices for all students and to ensure all those eligible for the Free and Reduced Lunch Program have access to the program. Unfortunately, there are families who may not qualify for free or reduced priced meals or others who feel they are unable to pay accumulated meal charges. As a result, the District is burdened with the cost of unpaid cafeteria balances. The purpose of this policy is to remain in compliance with USDA and PA Department of Education requirements and to provide accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances. In addition, the intent of this policy is to ensure the District maintains a clear and consistent approach to our meal charge policy.

Guidelines:

All meal prices are approved by the School Board annually and are published in the monthly menu.

a. Ability to Charge – All Grade Levels

Per the Pennsylvania School Code, all students are permitted to purchase reimbursable meals, even those who do not have funds to pay for their meal. This purchase of a meal will be “charged” to the student’s cafeteria account and represents an obligation that is owed to the District by the parent or guardian of that child. A meal DOES NOT include any a la carte or snack items purchased by the student. Each cafeteria has water available for students, so they may have something to drink with their meal each day at no additional cost.

If a student with a negative account balance attempts to purchase a la carte items, a non-reimbursable meal, or an additional meal, he or she will be politely informed by the food service employee that they do not have funds to purchase a snack, etc. at this time. Food Service Employees may not provide account balance details to students unless the student specifically asks what their balance is.

b. Students on the Free/Reduced Meal Program

Students that qualify for free or reduced meals will be permitted to purchase all qualifying (reimbursable) meals for no charge or at the reduced rate. However, if the student would like to purchase any a la carte items, extra milk, or a non-reimbursable meal, they must have available funds to do so.

c. Funding of Cafeteria Accounts

All students, parents, and guardians have the ability to fund their point of sale (POS) cafeteria account through payment of cash or check at the register in the cafeteria. Electronic payments are also accepted through the SchoolCafe website at www.schoolcafe.com.

d. Balance Notifications

At least twice a week, parents and guardians receive an automated phone call informing them if their child has a negative balance on their cafeteria account.

During the account set-up process in SchoolCafe and at any time during the school year, a parent/guardian has the ability to create a low-balance notification even if they do not use the system to make payments. This notification informs the parent if their student's balance drops below a certain level. If a parent/guardian does not have internet access, they may call the school district food service department to obtain their child's account balance.

Collecting of Delinquent Debt

- a. The District will continue to pursue delinquent debt throughout the school year.
- b. The same activity restrictions that apply to students who owe money for other school-related purposes will apply to students who owe money for school meals.
- c. The District may institute a collection procedure for unpaid balances including but not limited to filing a claim with the District Magistrate or delinquent collection agencies. Parents/Guardians will be responsible to pay the amount due to the cafeteria as well as any and all fees assigned by the District Magistrate or collection agency for the collection of monies due to the cafeteria.
- d. Once the District has utilized the collect measures for debt that remains uncollected, it is considered bad debt. The district is required to make a transfer from the general fund into the food service account to cover all bad debt.