

Woburn Public Schools Meal Debt Support and Collections

Purpose

The policy establishes consistent procedures for the collection of debts as they pertain to meals served to students in the Woburn Public Schools Food Services Department. Unpaid meal charges place a financial burden on the Food Services Department, which results in strain on the Woburn Public Schools operating budget.

Goals

The goals of this policy are:

1. To ensure that students are treated with dignity and respect with regard to the financial matter of meal debt
2. To ensure that parents and guardians are provided with options for meal debt resolution
3. To provide options for assistance for families to ensure that their children are provided stress free, nutritious school meals
4. To encourage those who are not in need of assistance to assume responsibility for meal payments

Responsibilities

Food Services Department – Responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the school district of outstanding balances. The Food Services Department is also responsible for notifying parents and guardians of low or outstanding balances.

School District – Responsible for ensuring that all students have access to a meal each and every day, creating a line of communication between families and the Food Services Department, and supporting the Food Services Department in collection activities.

Parents/Guardians – Responsible for payment of charged meals

Administration

All students receive a regular lunch each day regardless of overdue balances. All efforts to collect overdue lunch balances shall be directed at parents/guardians. Students will not be notified of balances unless they ask.

Balances Owed

The Food Services Department will communicate meal debt to parents/guardians via E-mail, text messaging, letters, and phone calls. All meal debts must be settled within 30 calendar days. Parents/Guardians with outstanding balances after 30 calendar days will offered the opportunity to apply for School Meal Assistance.

School Meal Assistance

The Woburn Public Schools offers school meals assistance for:

- a. Families who do not qualify for free or reduced lunch but are experiencing financial difficulty due to situational poverty
- b. Families who are faced with extreme medical bills
- c. Students who are emancipated
- d. Other sensitive matters not mentioned above

Parents/Guardians with outstanding meal debt balances that are not paid after 30 days will receive via E-mail and/or US Mail an application for school meal assistance. Parents/Guardians must complete and return this application within 15 calendar days.

Reduced Fee Lunch students will receive free lunch daily.

Past Due Accounts

Parents/Guardians with past due accounts beyond 60 calendar days, who have not completed the School Meal Assistance application, or who have been found ineligible for School Meal Assistance may be referred to a collections agency.

Additional Information

Blocks on Accounts: Parents/Guardians may request that a block be placed on their child's account to prohibit the child from purchasing ala carte items.

Refunds: All requests for refunds should be made in writing to the Director of the Food Services Department.

Unclaimed Funds: All requests for refund must be made within one year of departure or graduation. Unclaimed funds then become the property of the Woburn Public Schools Food Services Program.