

# Andover Public Schools Meal Charge Policy

## I. Purpose

The goal of the Andover Public Schools is to provide students with healthy, nutritious meals each day so they can focus in school, while also maintaining the financial integrity of the program and minimizing stigmatization of children with meal charges. However, unpaid meal charges place a large financial burden on the Food Services Department, as this department is a self-supporting business. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with federal reporting requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program, and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances.

The intent of this policy is to establish uniform meal account procedures throughout the Andover Public Schools. The provisions of this policy pertain to regular priced school breakfast and lunch meals only. While the USDA Child Nutrition Program does not require that a student who pays for regular priced meals be served a meal without payment, the Andover Public Schools provides this policy as a courtesy to those students in the event that they forget or lose their lunch money.

## II. Policy

### **Negative Balances and Meal Charges**

**All students** will pay for meals at the district's published standard rate as determined by their meal benefit status (full pay, reduced-price, or free) each day. After the balance reaches zero and enters the negative, students will not be allowed to purchase a la carte items such as a second entrée (pizza slice, bagel, etc.), snack, ice cream, or an additional beverage. The child will still be allowed to take a meal, and that meal will continue to be charged to the account at the standard lunch rate based on their meal benefit status. *The parent is responsible for any meal charges incurred.\** If it is a financial hardship, please contact food services directly at 978-247-5520 to discuss payment options such as an individualized repayment plan.

If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the administration will investigate the situation more closely and take further action as needed. If financial hardship exists, parents and families are encouraged to apply for free or reduced-price lunches for their child.

*If you need assistance applying for free or reduced-price school meals, please contact the Nutrition Coordinator or Director of Food Services at 978-247-5520 or visit [www.lunchapp.com](http://www.lunchapp.com) to apply online.*

### **Account Tracking/Blocks**

**\*Parents/Guardians** are responsible for all meal payments to the food service program. Notices of low or deficit balances will be sent to parents/guardians via email, post mail, and/or telephone at regular intervals during the school year. Parents have the ability to track student purchases via [www.sendmoneytoschool.com](http://www.sendmoneytoschool.com) regardless of whether or not they use the website to deposit money. If student purchases become an issue, parents have the ability to put a block on the account to prohibit the child from purchasing those items. Blocks that the Food Service Department can put on the child's account include: "No Breakfast," "No Lunch," "No Snack Food," and "Cash Only for A La Carte." To put a block on your child's account, please contact the nutrition office at 978-247-5520.

### **Point of Sale**

All school cafeterias possess computerized point of sale/cash register systems that maintain records of all monies deposited and spent for each student and said records are available by setting up an account at [www.sendmoneytoschool.com](http://www.sendmoneytoschool.com) or by speaking with the cafeteria manager. The point of sale service is designed to prevent overt identification of student meal benefits statuses. Cashiers will alert students of low balances and send them home with a deposit envelope prior to the account reaching zero. Parents will also receive automated low-balance emails weekly, if applicable. If emails do not result in payment, parents will receive a phone call from the nutrition department.

### **Making Payments**

Students/Parents/Guardians pay for meals in advance via [www.sendmoneytoschool.com](http://www.sendmoneytoschool.com) or with a check payable to Andover Food Service. Further details are available on our webpage at [www.andoverschoolnutrition.com](http://www.andoverschoolnutrition.com). Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a child may be without meal money on any given day. Any remaining funds for a particular student, whether positive or negative, will be carried over to the next school year.

### **Refunds**

Refunds for withdrawn and/or graduating students require a written request for a refund of any money remaining in their account to be submitted. An e-mail request is also acceptable. Students who are graduating at the end of the year also have the option to transfer funds to a sibling's account or to donate to a student in need with a written request.