



Meal Charge Policy

I. PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal charge account procedures for Valley Academy Charter School. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the Food Service Department. The goals of this policy are:

- a. To inform families of the availability of reimbursable school meals and provide information about applying for free or reduced-price meals.
- b. To establish a consistent school policy regarding charges and collection of charges.
- c. To treat all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts.
- d. To support positive situations with staff, students and parents/guardians to the maximum extent possible.
- e. To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote personal responsibility of the student and parent.
- f. To ensure that parent/guardian and student are aware that any information regarding meal accounts is strictly confidential and will only be discussed with them.

II. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

- a. The VAC administration and Food Service Department will jointly provide free and reduced-price meal applications in the VAC main office. Applications may also be acquired more confidentially from the VAC Director. Required income levels for both free meals and reduced-price meals are provided on the forms.
- b. The Food Service Department is responsible for maintaining charge records in cooperation with the Purchasing/Cashier Secretary. Purchasing/Cashier Secretary is also responsible for notifying the student's parent/guardian of low or outstanding balances.
- c. Administration is responsible for supporting the Food Service Department in collection activities.
- d. Parent/Guardian is responsible for maintaining a positive lunch account balance at all times. Parents can pay by credit card or checking account online at www.valleyacademycharter.com or in the front office.

III. REGULATIONS REGARDING INSUFFICIENT FUNDS IN A STUDENT ACCOUNT:

- a. Parents will receive an automated email or phone call when the student account has a negative balance of \$10.00 or more.
- b. The school will send notification by email, phone call or letter with an account balance of a deficit of \$20.00 or more. Families may be notified of their ability to fill out a free and reduced-price School Meals application (completing the application process is solely up to the parent's responsibility).

- c. Once the student account has accumulated a negative balance of \$25.00 or more students will be offered a reimbursable meal; no ala-carte items will be debited to a negative lunch account balance.
- d. Administrators will address further collection efforts at their discretion, which may include turning any accounts more than 30 days past due to a collection agency and/or attorney. Collections and or attorney fees may be assessed to the parent or guardian.
- e. Upon registration each family will receive a copy of the meal charge policy.
- f. All VAC employees with any responsibility for policy enforcement will receive a copy of the policy during staff orientation at the beginning of each school year.

VACS has procedures in place to promote parents being informed prior to becoming delinquent in addition to this policy.

NOTE: In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington D.C. 20250-9410 or call 800-795-3272 (voice) or 202-720-6382 (TTY). Valley Academy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.