YOUNG SCHOLARS OF CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

CHARTER SCHOOL

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School Lunch and Local Meal Charge Policy

Young Scholars of Central PA Charter School recognizes the importance of making available a well-balanced lunch for all students and participates in the National School Lunch Program. In accordance with federal guidelines, students may receive free lunch or lunch at a reduced rate. In accordance with United States Department of Agriculture guidelines, Local Education Agency's (LEA) participating in the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program and/or Special Milk Program and/or After School Snack Program agree to provide free and reduced-price meals and after school snacks, and free milk to eligible children.
The LEA assures the Pennsylvania State Department of Education that the LEA will uniformly implement the following policy to determine children's eligibility for free and reduced-price meals and free milk for kindergarten and free and reduced-price snacks in all schools that participate in the NSLP and/or SBP and/or After School Snack Program. The LEA also determines children's eligibility for free milk in schools with pricing programs participating in the SMP only. In fulfilling its responsibilities, the LEA agrees to all conditions outlined in the "Policy".

Act 55 of 2017 amended Section 1337 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code prohibiting schools from denying a school food program meal to any student who requests one but does not have the money to pay for the meal at the time of service or in their meal account.
Section 1337(D)(2) of the Pennsylvania Public School Code, inclusive of all amendments since 2017.

YSCP prohibits from denying a school food program meal to any student who requests a meal but does not have the money to pay for the meal at the time of service or in his or her meal account. YSCP may only withhold meals from a student if they receive written direction from a parent or guardian (Act 55 of 2017).

Communication about a student's school meal debt will be directed to the parent/guardian, not to the student. Such communication must occur when the student owes money for five or more meals. YSCP will then make at least two attempts to reach the parent or guardian (Act 55 of 2017).

YSCP does not publicly identify or stigmatize students because they have a school meal debt. Likewise, students cannot be made to do chores or other work to earn a school meal. YSCP prohibits from directing a student to discard a meal that has been served to them because they cannot pay for it at the time of service or because they have an existing school meal debt (Act 55 of 2017).

YSCP may restrict privileges or activities of students who owe money for school meals if those same restrictions apply to students who owe money for other school-related purposes (Act 39 of 2018).

Effective September 2019, students who are not eligible for participation in the school food program and who owe greater than $50 for school food program meals in a school year may be served an alternate meal instead of a school food program meal until the student's unpaid balance for school meals is paid, or a payment plan has been established with the school to reduce the unpaid balance (Act 16 of 2019).

Per federal regulations, all students in schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program are eligible for participation, regardless of their eligibility status of paid, free, or reduced. Therefore, the specific language added by Act 16 of 2019 does not apply to schools that participate in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs.

YSCP considers the following during implementation:

When implementing the requirements in Section 1337, YSCP is mindful that any changes made to address the law must align with the federal Local Meal Charge Policy requirements effective July 1, 2017 (see USDA memo SP 46-2016).

YSCP has revised its Local Meal Charge Policy to incorporate and align the state requirements as they relate to:

- Charging meals,
- Communicating with parents/guardians,
- Pursuing a collection of meal debt, and
- Removing bad debt from the Food Service Account.

In addition, YSCP will follow the PDE recommendation to perform a direct certification match on a weekly basis using the PrimeroEdge system to prevent students from being charged for meals when they may be eligible for free meals. Since the list is updated weekly and students are routinely added to the Direct Certification list throughout the school year, this practice will ensure that all direct certified students are being identified for free meals.

If a student is not on the Direct Certification list, the school may assist the family with applying for free or reduced-price meals. Schools should keep in mind that they must assist families in need of language interpretation services. Under special and limited circumstances (see Eligibility Manual for School Meals, Section 2, Eligible Households that Have Not Applied), an administrator may complete an application on behalf of a household when it is known from other sources that the student would qualify for free or reduced-price meals. In these situations, the

parent must be made aware that the student was granted benefits for free or reduced-price meals and may choose to deny these benefits.
Safeguarding the basic needs of students, which includes ensuring that no child is without proper nutrition, is a well-researched key component to producing positive outcomes in the educational system from academics to social, emotional, physiological, and behavioral health. Students do not perform or behave at their best when they are not well nourished. YSCP will encourage to exhaust all opportunities to ensure that students have the necessary nutrition to learn and grow.

YSCP Public Charter School Lunch Charge Procedures

Since 2017, the original language of Section 1337 has been amended two more times. Act 39 of 2018 added flexibility to the communication that was permitted regarding meal account balances, and most recently, Act 16 of 2019 amended the law by stipulating the amount of debt that can be incurred and actions a school may take.

Elementary and Middle School's Lunch Charging accommodations (currently in place):

Depositing Money into Student Accounts

Each student in the School is given an individual account with a unique number that remains with them as long as they are a student in the School. Parents/Guardians should use this number to add funds to their students' accounts on e-funds:

Parents are responsible for all charges on their student's account and are encouraged to frequently check the account balance to ensure adequate funds are available for their student(s) to purchase school lunches, and a la carte items.

Student purchase history and meal account balance can be viewed online through e-fund: https://payments.efundsforschools.com/v3/districts/56091 Parents choosing to utilize e-funds will need a valid email address and their student's identification number. A minimal fee is charged to deposit funds through e-funds; however, there is no cost to parents for creating an account to view their student's general account information.

If parents prefer not to use e-funds system to deposit funds, money may be added to student accounts by sending cash or checks made payable to "YSCP" to school in an envelope with the student's name, ID number, and the amount of the deposit written on the front.

Negative Account Balance Procedures:

1) All Parents will be informed when their child has a negative balance.
2) A letter will be sent to parents from the Business Office, notifying the parent their child has an outstanding lunch balance.
3) A follow-up Phone call will be made if the payment is not made within the time limit.
4) If no payment is received within ten days, the Business Manager will be provided with the outstanding lunch balance information and will contact the parent.

5) Outstanding Lunch Charges will be carried forward into the next school year.

Collection of Outstanding Balances:

If a student has a negative balance at the close of the school year or following a transfer to another district, the staff will submit a financial obligation report. The financial obligation will remain the responsibility of the student's parents/guardians until it is paid in full.
If a student has a negative account balance upon graduation, the student will not be authorized to attend any senior activities or the commencement ceremony until the negative balance is paid.

Requesting an Account Refund or Balance Transfer:

Positive balances for underclassmen will be automatically carried over to the next school year.

Refunds from student meal accounts are granted when a student graduates, leaves the School, or a special circumstance necessitates the refund.

Upon withdrawing from the School, students must bring their account to a zero balance. For students with a balance of more than $2.00 in his/her meal accounts, parents/guardians are asked to complete, sign, and submit the Meal Account Balance Refund or Transfer Request available as a related file below.

Please note, balance of $2.00 or less will be anonymously donated to families in need of assistance with meal accounts.

Parents are encouraged to make payments online using the e-funds system by visiting:
https://payments.efundsforschools.com/v3/districts/56091

Parents are encouraged to apply for Eligibility (Free & Reduced lunch program)