

NEW HEIGHTS SCHOOLS, INC.

POLICY 534

SCHOOL MEALS POLICY

POLICY MANAGEMENT

Adopted: 8/2018

Reviewed/ Revised: 11/20*, 11/23, 4/26**

Mandatory: Yes

Frequency: Every 3 years

Distribution: School website and available on request

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that students receive healthy and nutritious meals through the school's nutrition program and that school employees, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations regarding meal charges. The policy seeks to allow students to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day and minimize identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals as well as to maintain the financial integrity of the school nutrition program.

II. PAYMENT OF MEALS

A. Students have a meal account. When the balance reaches zero, a student may charge no more than a week's worth of meals to this account. When an account reaches this limit, a student may not be allowed to charge further meals or a la carte items until the negative account balance is paid.

B. Free School Meals Program

1. The free school meals program is created within the Minnesota Department of Education.

2. Each school that participates in the United States Department of Agriculture National School Lunch program and has an Identified Student Percentage at or above the federal percentage determined for all meals to be reimbursed at the free rate must participate in the federal Community Eligibility Provision in order to participate in the free school meals program.

3. Each school that participates in the free school meals program must:

a. participate in the United States Department of Agriculture School Breakfast Program and the United States Department of Agriculture National School Lunch Program; and

b. provide to all students at no cost up to two (2) federally reimbursable meals per school day, with a maximum of one (1) free breakfast and one (1) free lunch.

c. A student who has been determined eligible for free and reduced-price meals must always be served a reimbursable meal even if the student has an outstanding debt.

C. Once a meal has been placed on a student's tray or otherwise served to a student, the meal may not be subsequently withdrawn from the student by the cashier or other school official, whether or not the student has an outstanding meals balance.

D. When a student has a negative account balance, the student will not be allowed to charge a snack item.

III. LOW OR NEGATIVE ACCOUNT BALANCES – NOTIFICATION

A. The school will make reasonable efforts to notify families when meal account balances are low or fall below zero.

B. Reminders for payment of outstanding student meal balances will not demean or stigmatize any student participating in the school lunch program.

IV. UNPAID MEAL CHARGES

A. The school will make reasonable efforts to communicate with families to resolve the matter of unpaid charges. Where appropriate, families may be encouraged to apply for free and reduced-price meals for their children.

B. The school will make reasonable efforts to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. Unpaid meal charges are designated as delinquent debt when payment is overdue, the debt is considered collectable, and efforts are being made to collect it.

C. Negative balances of more than the sum of a week's worth of meals, not paid prior to the end of the school year, may be turned over to the principal or principal's designee for collection. Collection options may include, but are not limited to, use of collection agencies, claims in the conciliation court, or any other legal method permitted by law.

D. The school may not enlist the assistance of non-school employees, such as volunteers, to engage in debt collection efforts.

E. The school will not impose any other restriction prohibited under Minnesota Statutes, section 123B.37 due to unpaid student meal balances. The charter school will not limit a student's participation in any school activities, graduation

ceremonies, field trips, athletics, activity clubs, or other extracurricular activities or access to materials, technology, or other items provided to students due to an unpaid student meal balance

V. COMMUNICATION OF POLICY

- A. This policy and any pertinent supporting information shall be provided on the school's website and from the main office upon request.

Legal References:

Minn. Stat. § 123B.37 (Prohibited Fees)

Minn. Stat. § 124D.111 (School Meals Policies; Lunch Aid; Food Service Accounting)

42 U.S.C. § 1751 et seq. (Healthy and Hunger-Free Kids Act)

7 C.F.R. § 210 et seq. (School Lunch Program Regulations)

7 C.F.R. § 220.8 (School Breakfast Program Regulations)