

## **Diocese of Lexington Charging Policy for National School Lunch, Breakfast and Snack Program**

### **PURPOSE/POLICY:**

The purpose of this policy is to insure compliance with federal reporting requirements for the school's participating in the NSLP and to provide accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the Diocese Food Service Department. This policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the Diocese.

Federal reporting requirements do not allow the Child Nutrition Program to charge lunches. Only meals that are paid for can be reported to the Federal government for reimbursement. Students may pay for meals in advance, at the time of purchases or make electronic payments. Our charging policy at the Diocese of Lexington School's is a five meal maximum, not to exceed \$15.00. Once a child reaches the maximum meal charge, no a la carte items will be sold to a child and transactions for these items will be sold on a cash only basis.

Students will be served a differentiated meal when they accrue an unpaid balance in excess of the dollar limit established by the Diocese. The differentiated meal will consist of a cheese sandwich, veggie sticks, fruit and milk. All children will be treated with dignity in the serving line and will not be embarrassed because of a negative balance. The designated alternate meal will be charged to the child's account at the standard lunch rate and reported for federal reimbursement. Parent/Visitor/Staff meals are paid for at the time of service and are not charged. Parents/Guardians are emailed weekly from the central office concerning their negative accounts. If they have not responded within (3) days then the school cafeteria manager shall send parents written notice home with the child or contact them by phone. Balances that still remain unpaid with no response may require the assistance of the principal or superintendent. Delay the issuance or report cards, grade transfer, and limited program participation may be enforced.

All school cafeterias possess computerized point of sale/cash register systems that maintain a record of all monies deposited and spent for each student and said record will be made available to the parent upon request. Each school will inform parents that meals can be paid for in advance and that balances may be maintained in their child's account to minimize the possibility that the child may be without meal money on any given day. All parents have access to mySchoolbucks, which keeps them up to date on the child's account and allows them to make payments. If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the manager will investigate the situation more closely, including contacting the parent/guardian to bring money to the school and/or encouraging the parent to apply for free or reduced price meals.

When a check is returned to the Diocese of Lexington for non-sufficient funds procedures must be followed to recover the money. A letter will be sent certified to inform the parent/guardian from the Food Service Director concerning the returned check. Payment for the NSF check must be in the form of cash, cashier's check, or money order. Payment must be received within ten (10) days of the date of the letter. The penalty fee and the amount of the check will be deducted from the child/children's account immediately upon notice from the bank. If no response is made in ten (10) days and the certified notice has been returned, then it will be turned over to local County Attorney's Office for collection.'

The main goal, other than feeding our child/children, is to encourage the parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of the meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student.

Legal Reference: 7 CFR 210