

## Meal Charge and Prohibition Against Meal Shaming Policy

### Goals

- To ensure that students have access to nutritious meals and so that no child goes hungry.
- To treat all students with dignity and confidentiality and ensure that regardless of meal debt students are treated the same especially in the serving lines.
- To foster clear and positive communication that outlines the processes of paying/prepaying for meals.
- To provide parent(s)/guardian(s) notification of meal charges in a way that does not stigmatize, distress or embarrass students and minimizes the fiscal burden to the district in compliance with federal requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program.

Students eligible for free meals are allowed to receive a free breakfast meal and lunch meal of their choice each day. Reduced eligible students will pay \$.25 for breakfast and \$.25 for lunch each day. Full pay students will pay for meals at the school's published paid meal rate each day. It is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to pay for or pack a child's lunch when sending them to school. The Board of Education recognizes there might be occasions when a parent/guardian forgets to do so. Although we strongly discourage the practice of charging meals, the following policy is in place:

### Students Grades PreK-12<sup>th</sup>

- Charged Meals - A student will be allowed to choose from any reimbursable breakfast meal or lunch meal offered to all students.
- All students must pay or prepay for snacks/extras at the time of purchase.
- Prepayment for meals, snacks and extras is available and encouraged.
- Staff will deal directly with parents/guardians regarding meal charges and debt collection.
- Staff will not take any action directed at a student to collect unpaid meal charges. For example, teachers will not hand out collection letters during class, students will not be publicly identified or stigmatized regarding charges.

### Parent Notification and Outreach

- The School Food Service Director will communicate with principals, counselors and other appropriate staff to address the meal debt and how to best assist the parents/guardians. Two attempts to offer assistance with the meal application will be made. Parents/guardians will be notified that a student's meal account balance is exhausted and has accrued meal charges as follows:
- Low Balance Alerts and Charge notices will be emailed weekly to a parent/guardian that has their email address in School Tool (current student database).
- Letters will be mailed to families from the Cafeteria Office for any amount above \$5.00 once per month.
- Phone calls will be made to parents/guardians with charge amounts over \$35.00 to inform and to provide assistance, if needed.
- Accounts with charges above \$50.00 will be turned over to the District Office for debt collection.

### Payment/Prepayment Options

1. Money can be sent in with your child and given to the cashier. Place checks (preferred) or cash in an envelope with your child's first **and** last name clearly marked on it. **Make checks out to: Peru CSD.**
2. Mail payments to **Food Service Director, PO Box 68, Peru, NY 12972.**
3. Drop-off payments at any of the principal's offices.
4. Pay online via our computerized register system currently at [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com) ([click here](#))

## **Meal Charge and Prohibition Against Meal Shaming Policy**

### **Staff Training**

- Staff training will be conducted annually and throughout the year as needed on the procedures for managing meal charges.
- New hires will be provided this training prior to starting work.

### **Unused Account Balances**

Money remaining in a student's account at the end of the school year is carried forward to the next school year. If your child has a balance left in their account at the time of graduation or withdrawal from school, you can do any of the following:

1. Request a refund by providing in a letter or email to the School Food Service Director specifying the name and address to mail the check to.
2. Have the money transferred to a sibling(s) or another account.
3. Donate the balance to The Food for Thought account, which provides assistance to needy students.
4. Unclaimed funds must be requested within one school year. After one school year unclaimed funds will be applied to the Food for Thought account mentioned above.

### **Adult Employees, Volunteers and Visitors**

Adult charging of meals is not authorized. Adults should request an account be created for them in the computerized register system and payment at the time of service or prepayment is expected.

### **Additional Parameters for School Food Service Staff**

Outstanding year-end debt resulting from nonpayment of school meals is an unallowable cost to the nonprofit school food service account and cannot be absorbed by the School Food Service Department. Such outstanding debt will be transferred to the District Office for collection.

### **Annual Notification**

- The principal of each grade span will provide notice to all parents/guardians annually.
- The policy will be mailed home with the District annual mailing.
- The policy will be available on the District website.

**Ref:** Memo-Revised-New York State Legislation: Prohibition Against Meal Shaming  
Dated- June 8, 2018, From NYS Education Department and Paula Tyner-Doyle, State Director,  
42 USC 1779 (Child Nutrition Act of 1966)  
42 USC 1758(t) (1); 1766(a) (National School Lunch Act)

First Reading Date: July 2, 2018

Second Reading and Adoption: August 14, 2018