

**AVERILL PARK MEAL CHARGE  
and  
PROHIBITION AGAINST MEAL SHAMING POLICY**

**Purpose:**

The goal of the Averill Park Central School District is to provide student access to nutritious no-cost or low-cost meals each school day. However, unpaid charges place a large financial burden on our District. The purpose of this policy is to insure compliance with federal requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program, and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances. The intent of this policy is to establish procedures to address unpaid meal charges throughout the District. The provisions of this policy pertain to regular priced school breakfast, lunch and meals only. Charging of items outside of the reimbursable meals (a la carte items, snacks, adult meals, etc.) is expressly prohibited.

**Policy:****MEAL DEPOSITS & PAYMENT METHODS:**

1. Students/Parents/Guardians may pay for meals in advance via [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com) or with a check payable to Averill Park School Lunch Fund or by cash. Further details are available on our webpage at [www.averillpark.k12.ny.us](http://www.averillpark.k12.ny.us). Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a student may be without meal money on any given day. Any remaining funds for a particular student may/will be carried over to the next school year.
2. Refunds for withdrawn, and graduating students; a written or e-mailed request for a refund of any money remaining in their account must be submitted to the Food Service Director. Students who are graduating at the end of the year will be given the option to transfer to a sibling's account with a written request.
3. Unclaimed Funds must be requested within one school year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the Averill Park CSD Food Service Program.
4. Free Meal Benefit - Free eligible students will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch each day. A la carte purchases must be paid/prepaid.
5. Reduced Meal Benefit - Reduced eligible students will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch each day. A la carte purchases must be paid/prepaid.
6. Full Pay Students – Students will pay for meals at the school's published paid meal rate each day. If a student is without meal money they will be allowed to charge meals to their account after the balance reaches zero. The charge meals offered to students will be reimbursable meals that are available to all students. Students with negative account balances will be unable to make cash snack or a la carte purchases until their balance is paid-in-full.

STAFF TRAINING:

1. School staff will be trained annually and throughout the year as needed on the procedures for managing meal charges using the NYSED Webinar or the school's training program.
2. School staff training includes ongoing eligibility certification for free or reduced price meals.

PARENT NOTIFICATION:

1. Parents/Guardians will be sent an email notice within five (5) days of the student's account balance being exhausted, informing the Parent/Guardian that unpaid meal charges are due. Notice will continue to be sent via email every thirty (30) days thereafter if the account remains in a negative balance status. The notice will include options and procedures for establishing repayment.
2. Parents/Guardians without email accessibility will be sent a notice via US Mail within five (5) days of the student's account balance being exhausted, informing the Parent/Guardian that unpaid meal charges are due. Notice will continue to be sent via US Mail every thirty (30) days thereafter if the account remains in a negative balance status. The notice will include options and procedures for establishing repayment.
3. At no time will the District charge interest and/or late fees in connection with any meals charged.

PARENT OUTREACH:

1. School staff will communicate with parents/guardians with five or more meal charges to determine eligibility for free or reduced price meals.
2. School staff will make two documented attempts to reach out to parents/guardians to complete a meal application in addition to the application and instructions provided in the school enrollment packet.
3. School staff will contact the parent/guardian to offer assistance with completion of meal application to determine if there are other issues within the household causing the student to have insufficient funds, offering any other assistance that is appropriate.

MINIMIZING STUDENT DISTRESS:

1. School staff will not publicly identify or stigmatize any student on the line or discuss any outstanding meal debt in the presence of any other students.
2. Students who incur meal charges will not be required to wear a wristband or handstamp, or to do chores or work to pay for meals.
3. School staff will not throw away a meal after it has been served because of the student's inability to pay for the meal or because of previous meal charges.
4. School staff will not take any action directed at a pupil to collect unpaid school meal fees.

5. School staff will deal directly with parents/guardians regarding unpaid school meal fees.

ONGOING ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION:

1. School staff will conduct direct certification with NYSSIS or using NYSED Roster Upload to maximize free eligibility. NYSED provides updated direct certification data monthly.
2. School staff will provide parents/guardians with free and reduced price application and instructions at the beginning of each school year and in the school enrollment packet. The enrollment packet will include instructions on how to access and complete an on-line version of the application and how to request a paper application at no cost.
3. School staff will provide at least two additional free and reduced price applications throughout the school year to families identified as owing meal charges.
4. School staff in extenuating circumstances, may complete a free and reduced application on behalf of a student given sufficient cause and documentation supporting the student's eligibility as provided for under Federal regulations, 7 CFR, Part 245.6 (d) regarding administrative prerogative.
5. School staff will coordinate with the District's Liaison for foster, temporarily displaced, migrant and runaway children to immediately certify these students for free meals.

Adopted: 06/26/06

Revised: 08/19/14

Adopted: 07/24/17

Approved: 07/10/19