

# Addison Rutland Supervisory Union

## Meal Charge Procedure

### I. Purpose:

The purpose of this document is to establish consistent procedures for the Addison Rutland Supervisory Union, which includes Slate Valley Modified Unified Union School District and Orwell School District, to provide meals to students who have insufficient funds in their school meal accounts and the collection of unpaid meal debt.

### II. General Statement of Procedure:

- A. The Addison Rutland Supervisory Union recognizes proper nutrition is essential for adequate learning to occur and to establish lifelong, healthy eating habits while also working to maintain the financial integrity of the school food service program.
- B. It is the procedure of Addison Rutland Supervisory Union to offer high quality, healthy breakfasts and lunches that meet the federal guidelines to all students at a reasonable cost to ensure no child goes hungry while at school.
- C. Meals must be paid for either in advance or with cash at the register daily. Payments to student accounts are made by either sending a check to the school which can be applied to a student's meal account or by going online to <https://abbeygroup.net> to make a payment using a credit card. Checks should be made payable to ARSU Food Service Program.
  - 1) It is the responsibility of families to provide meals for their students and to ensure that money is deposited into student meal accounts.
  - 2) It is the responsibility of families to maintain a positive balance in student meal accounts throughout the year.
- D. Families may apply for free and reduced-price meals at any time during the school year. Meal applications are distributed to households annually by mail or email prior to the first day of school. Parents are encouraged to complete and return the applications as soon as possible. In addition, applications are available at the school office during regular business hours and online at [www.arsu.org](http://www.arsu.org), [www.slatevalleyunified.org](http://www.slatevalleyunified.org) or [www.orwell.arsu.org](http://www.orwell.arsu.org). If household size changes or income changes, families may re-apply for meal benefits any time during the school year.
  - 1) Households who apply for free and reduced-price meal benefits are responsible for payment of all school meals and accumulated charges until approval is granted. Federal guidelines allow a maximum of 10 days to approve a new application. No child is allowed a free or reduced price meal without an approved application or direct certification information on file. Parents will receive a notification letter of the student's eligibility showing the effective date. If a notification letter is not received within 10 days, the parent should check with the approving official at the Addison Rutland Supervisory Union Central Office at (802) 265-4905 to obtain the status of the application.
  - 2) Households who are receiving 3SquaresVT or Reach-Up benefits will receive a notification of eligibility letter based on Direct Certification from the district if the district has received information about your child(ren). If your household receives these benefits and you have not received a notification of eligibility letter from the district, it means the district has not received information regarding eligibility of your child(ren), and the household must contact the district immediately at 265-4905 to provide current information.

- 3) Free and reduced-price eligible students may receive one (1) reimbursable breakfast and one (1) reimbursable lunch each day at no charge.
- 4) **A la carte items, such as a separate carton of milk or a second entrée, are not allowed to be charged and therefore must be paid for at the time of purchase.**

### **III. Meal Charge Procedure:**

- A. If the student account has insufficient funds to pay for breakfast and/or lunch meals, the following procedure will apply:
  - 1) When the account balance is approximately \$5.00 overdrawn the parent will be contacted by phone, and a letter will be sent home with the student stating that payment is due and required the next day.
  - 2) If a student meal account balance reaches \$10.00 or more overdrawn the building administrator will be notified. The school district will check with the student at the beginning of the school day to determine if the student has money for meals. If the student does not have money and has not brought food from home, a reimbursable emergency meal will be provided. An emergency meal might include a cheese sandwich, vegetable sticks, fruit and milk. Only one emergency meal will be provided to a student after which it will be expected that the student will bring food from home until such time as the student's meal account is no longer overdrawn.
  - 3) The Food Service Manager and the Principal (or designee) will monitor the student during meal periods to make certain the student is receiving meals provided by the student's family.
  - 4) The Principal (or designee) will determine if further action is warranted when students are not being provided a meal from home which may include filing of a report to the Department of Children and Families.
- B. Free and reduced-price eligible students will always be provided a meal regardless of unpaid student accounts.
- C. A student eligible for paid meals who has 'cash in hand' at the time of meal service will be provided a meal regardless of unpaid student accounts. The 'cash in hand' will not be applied to past due accounts.

### **IV. Account Status Notifications:**

- A. Households are strongly encouraged to keep sufficient funds in their student's account(s) to cover weekly meal purchases. Families can check on account balances by the following means:
  - The Food Service Program will send a weekly email and paper notice to families regarding an overdue balance.
  - Families can check their account balances online via the Meals Plus system.
  - Families may contact the Food Service Manager at school:
    - Benson Village School – [benenson@abbeygroup.net](mailto:benenson@abbeygroup.net) or 537-2491
    - Castleton Elementary School – [castleton@abbeygroup.net](mailto:castleton@abbeygroup.net) or 468-5624
    - Castleton Village School – [castleton@abbeygroup.net](mailto:castleton@abbeygroup.net) or 468-2203
    - Fair Haven Grade School – [fairhaven@abbeygroup.net](mailto:fairhaven@abbeygroup.net) or 265-3883
    - Fair Haven High School -- [fhhs@abbeygroup.net](mailto:fhhs@abbeygroup.net) or 265-4966
    - Orwell Village School – [orwell@abbeygroup.net](mailto:orwell@abbeygroup.net) or 948-2871
  - High school students will be given a verbal reminder or written notice in the

food service line.

- B. Families will be notified when the student account balance has reached \$5.00 by either phone or a letter sent home.
- Parents will be notified by email when the student account reaches the minimum balance of \$5.00 or less.
  - An email reminder will be sent to parents once the student account reaches \$0.
  - Weekly emails will be sent to parents whose children have a negative account balance.
  - Notices will be sent home with elementary school students weekly.

## V. Collection of Unpaid Meal Debt:

When the student balance is \$5.00 or more overdrawn, the following collection activities will be followed:

- The Food Service Manager (or designated staff) will contact the household to request payment.
- The Food Service Manager will contact the building principal if no payment is received.
- The building principal (or designated staff) will contact the household to discuss the requirement of the family to provide meals for the student.
- The building principal may contact the local social services office if the household refuses to provide meals or pay for student meals.
- A certified letter may be sent to the household notifying them that the debt will be turned over to a collection agency if not paid by a certain date.
- All funds owed to the food service program will be paid in full on the last day of school.
- If a student ends the school year with an overdrawn account balance, it may affect the student's ability to participate in graduation ceremonies with their class.

Reviewed by: Handbook Committee

Approved by: Brooke Olsen Farrell  
Superintendent Signature

Brooke Olsen Farrell 8-16-18  
Printed Name Date

Cheryl Scarzello  
SFA Representative Signature

Cheryl Scarzello 8-16-18  
Printed Name Date