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Meal Charge Policy for Rice Memorial High School

- I. Purpose** - The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent procedures for Rice Memorial High School to provide meals to students who have insufficient funds in their school meal accounts and the collection of unpaid meal debt.

General Statement of Policy –

- A. The Rice Memorial High School 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 policy of Rice Memorial High School 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.
- C. Payments to student accounts are made through Meals Plus online at <https://www.k12paymentcenter.com> and in person in the lunch line.
- D. Families may apply for free and reduced-price meals at any time during the school year. Meal applications are distributed to households via email at the start of each school year and are located on the state's website all year round. 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 <http://education.vermont.gov/documents/nutrition-free-reduced-meals-application>. 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 school to see if the application has been received.
 - 2) Households who are receiving 3SquaresVT or Reach-Up benefits will receive a notification of eligibility letter based on Direct Certification from the school if the school has received information about your child(ren). If your household receives these benefits and you have not received this letter from the school, the school has not received information regarding eligibility of your child(ren), the household must contact the school immediately to provide current information.
 - 3) Free and reduced-price eligible students may receive a breakfast and a 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.

Meal Charge Policy –

- A. If the student account has insufficient funds to pay for breakfast and/or lunch meals, Rice Memorial High School will allow the student to go two meals negative on their account. If there is an issue where kids are beyond that point we go on a case by case basis and they are still allowed to eat however, the Cafeteria POS manager will reach out to the parents to remind them to refill the account to not draw attention to the child in front of other students. All negative balances must be paid prior to the end of the school year. Any remaining balances will be carried over to the next school year.
- 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.
- D. Students with an overdrawn account are not allowed to charge a la carte items.

Account Status Notifications –

- A. Households are strongly encouraged to keep sufficient funds in the student accounts to cover weekly meal purchases. The Abbey Group will notify each household of account balances by email or phone.
 - Families can check their account balances online via Meals Plus.
 - Families may contact the Food Service Director at 802-933-4747 and steve@abbeygroup.net
 - Students will be given a verbal reminder or written notice in the food service line.
- B. The family will be notified when the student account balance has reached more than \$10.00 in the negative by phone or email based on what information is in the POS. Parents will get an automatic notification by email when the student account reaches the minimum balance of \$5.00/\$10.00 or less.
 - An email reminder will be sent to parents once the student account reaches \$0 and weekly emails will be sent to parents whose children have a negative account balance.
 - A second request for payment will be sent after 5 days if the household has not responded to the first request.
 - A letter is sent to parents via the U.S. Mail requesting payment.
 - The Abbey Group will contact parents whose student accounts have a negative balance.
 - If necessary, an invoice will be sent via certified mail, return receipt requested.

Collection of Unpaid Meal Debt –

When the student balance is negative \$10.00 or more, the following collection activities will be followed:

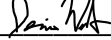
- a) Rice Memorial High School:

- The Food Service Manager/Director (or designated staff) will contact the household request payment.
- The Food Service Manager/Director will contact the building principal if no payment is received.
- The building principal 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 will be sent to the household notifying them that the debt will be turned over to a collection agency if not paid by (specify date).
- All funds owed to the food service program will be paid in full on the last day of school.
- Checks returned with non-sufficient funds will follow the district's policy.

Reviewed by: _____

Approved by: Lisa Lorenz (electronically signed) June 28, 2017

Superintendent Signature



SFA Representative Signature

Printed Name

Denise Watson

Printed Name

Date

06/28/2017

Date