

## FOOD SERVICE CHARGE – STUDENT AND ADULT MEALS

Each student may have a point-of-sale cafeteria account. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to maintain a positive balance in the student's meal account. Participation is voluntary as students may bring a sack lunch from home.

Parents or guardians who establish a cafeteria account may deposit money in advance on a student's account with a debit/credit card by using the District's payment website. Use of this on-line program also allows parents and guardians to track account balances, monitor meals purchased and receive low balance e-mail notifications. Deposits for cafeteria can also be accepted at all school buildings.

## **NUTRITION SERVICES**

### **Charging Policies and Negative Balances:**

The Ephrata School District believes it is in the best interest of students grades K – 12 are to be provided nutritious meals for maximizing learning. We realize there are extenuating circumstances in life. However, we must limit individual negative account balances to ensure financial accountability. The following procedures are in place:

#### **Staff Charge Policy**

- All staff are required to have funds on their account before charging.
- Charging without sufficient funds to cover said charge is not allowed.
- In the event staff have a negative balance the Food Services Department will notify staff of the negative balance monthly.

#### **Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Student Charge Policy**

- No tray will be withheld from any student regardless of their Food Services balance.
- Parent/Guardians will be notified verbally through the Food Services automated phone notification system and/or paper notification by the Building Secretary to bring money when their meal account balance reaches three lunches or less. Staff will only notify the student of a meal balance if they are asked.
- When a student's balance is negative -\$5.00 or greater a low payor balance notice will be sent home with the student in a sealed envelope to the attention of the parent/guardian on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of each month until the account reflects a positive balance.

- When a student balance reaches negative -\$20.00 the parent is contacted by the Principal or his designee to determine the ability to pay and to see if assistance can be offered in completing the Free & Reduced Priced Meal Application if not already completed.
- The Food Services Supervisor or designee will send a letter to the parent/guardian monthly when a student has a negative balance of -\$40.00 or greater.
- The Business Manager will send written notification to the parent or guardian of a student with balances in the amount of -\$40.00 or more via mail at the end of the school year.
- Students will continue to receive meals even with an overdrawn balance.
- Charging (overdrawing) is strongly discouraged.

**Lunch Account Refunds for students withdrawn from the District:**

Due to the administrative expense of issuing a check, amounts less than \$10.00 will not be refunded (a refund will be given if the students in the same family have a balance totaling \$10.00 or more). Refunds are processed monthly and will be issued either at the end of the current month or the end of the next month depending on when they are received at the District Office.

**If a student withdraws during the school year and they notify us;** their parent can fill out an Ephrata Food Service Request for Refund to Parent form in the school office.

1. The office will send the original to the Business Manager for processing.
2. Once the form has been submitted to the District Office for refund;
  - a. The Building Secretary will zero out (Close) the account by issuing a payment in Skyward and documenting a refund was given or;
  - b. A copy of the refund request form is sent to the Nutrition Services Supervisor to close the account by issuing a payment in Skyward and documenting that a refund was given.

**If a student withdraws during the school year but does not notify the District and the balance is less than \$10.00;**

- a. Look for another student in the same family to transfer the balance to or;
- b. As part of the year end process: transfer the remaining balance to the food services Helping Hand donation account. The Helping Hand account is set up to pay lunch or breakfast fees for students who need help paying. (Needy students are identified by the school counselors and Nutrition Services Supervisor).
- c. The Building Secretary or Nutrition Services Supervisor will zero out (Close) the students account by issuing a payment in Skyward as a negative dollar amount and documenting as a transfer to the Helping Hand donation account. The dollar amount will be then entered as a positive or deposit in the Helping Hand donation account.
- d. If a student withdraws during the school year and has a negative remaining balance; as part of the year end process these accounts are closed out using the Helping Hand (money from Helping Hand is used to cover the amount due and “zero” out the account through a transfer of funds).

**For graduating senior with a remaining balance over \$10.00 in their food service account with no sibling to transfer the balance to;**

- a. As part of the year end food service procedures, the Nutrition Services Supervisor will attempt to contact the student’s parents by phone to verify a mailing address to send the refund to. It will be the responsibility of the Nutrition Services Supervisor to fill out the form, send the form to the District Office for a refund and close the account in Skyward. If the Nutrition Services Supervisor is unable to contact the parent of the withdrawn student to verify a mailing address, the account will be closed and the remaining balance transferred to the Helping Hand donation account as described in part b in the previous section.

All active student and staff funds that are not refunded will carry over to the next school year.