

# **Eagle Ridge Academy**

## **School District Meal Charge Procedure**

### **I. PURPOSE OF PROCEDURE:**

The purpose of this procedure is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the district. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the food service department. The goals of this standard of practice are:

- To treat all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts
- To support positive situations with district staff, district business policies, student and parent/guardian to the maximum extent possible
- To establish policies that are age appropriate
- To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student
- To establish a consistent district procedure regarding charges and collection of charges

### **II. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:**

- The food service department: Responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the student's parent/guardian.
  
- The Parent/Guardian: Immediate payment

### **IV. ADMINISTRATION**

1. Families are encouraged to apply for free and reduced price meal benefit. Any family that falls into a negative balance will receive one or more of the following: an email, written notification and/or phone call to encourage them to apply for free or reduced price meal benefits.
  
2. Families are encouraged to pre-pay for meals through the online payment option available on the school website under Food Service or payments of cash or check may be accepted in the school office on the day of service. Written notification of prepayment options occurs at the beginning of each school year, is given to each new transfer student, is posted on the Food Service website, and is included in the student handbook.
  
3. Families will be notified of the school Unpaid Meal Charge Procedure in writing before the school year begins and with each new transfer student. This procedure will also be posted on the Food Service Website.

5. Parents of all school students will receive an email and/or phone call once a week informing them of their delinquent accounts.
  - a. Emails and phone calls on delinquent accounts are made on a weekly basis to try to collect payment.
  - b. No charges are allowed for extras or a la carte foods on any negative accounts or accounts with a zero balance.
  - c. All delinquent accounts at the beginning of May of the current school year will be subject to collections for payment.
  - d. If a child has money to purchase a reduced price or paid meal at the time of the meal service, the child must be provided a meal. SFAs may not use the child's money to repay previously unpaid charges if the child intended to use the money to purchase that day's meal.
  
7. Students will not be denied meals if they have a delinquent account. Alternate meals for students with delinquent accounts will not be provided, the child will be offered the same reimbursable meal as the rest of the students.
  
8. Long-term payment plans for households struggling to pay back a negative balance will be established. Unpaid meal charges will be carried over at the end of the school year (i.e., beyond June 30) as a delinquent debt and collection efforts will continue into the new school year. This will allow us to work with individual families to establish longer repayment plans and to continue pursuing collection efforts when children change schools within the district or move to a new school outside the district. When local officials determine further collection efforts for delinquent debt are useless or too costly, the debt must be reclassified as "bad debt."