



Book	Brewster Central School District Policy Manual
Section	5000 - Non-Instructional/Business Operations
Title	Food Service Management, Meal Charge and Prohibition Against Meal Shaming, Free and Reduced Price Food Services
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FOOD SERVICE MANAGEMENT, MEAL CHARGE AND PROHIBITION AGAINST MEAL SHAMING, FREE AND REDUCED PRICE FOOD SERVICES

Food Service Management

The Board of Education recognizes that school cafeterias and the school meal program are a part of the total school program. An attractive, wholesome, well-balanced meal is essential for the best work from students. The Board shall therefore provide adequate facilities, resources and personnel for the provision of food services for all elementary and secondary students in district schools. Food service management is the responsibility of the Food Service Director. The school food service should be operated in the most economical, efficient and satisfactory method given the student's needs and the district's resources.

Purpose

The goal of the Brewster Central School District is to provide student access to nutritious no-or low-cost meals each school day and to ensure that a pupil whose parent/guardian has unpaid school meal fees is not shamed or treated differently than a pupil whose parent/guardian does not have unpaid meal fees.

Unpaid charges place a large financial burden on our school. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with federal requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances to ensure that the student is not stigmatized, distressed or embarrassed.

The intent of this policy is to establish procedures to address unpaid meal charges throughout the Brewster Central School District in a way that does not stigmatize distress or embarrass students. The provisions of this policy pertain to regular priced reimbursable school breakfast, lunch and snack meals only. The Brewster Central School District provides this policy as a courtesy to those students in the event that they forget or lose their money. Charging of items outside of the reimbursable meals (a la carte items, adult meals, etc.) is expressly prohibited.

Policy

Free Meal Benefit - Free eligible students will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch meal of their choice each day. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.

Reduce Meal Benefit - Reduced eligible students will be allowed to receive a breakfast and lunch of their choice at no charge each day. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.

Full Pay Students - Students will pay for meals at the school's published paid meal rate each day. The charge meals offered to students will be reimbursable meals available to all students, unless the student's parent or guardian has specifically provided written permission to the school to withhold a meal. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.

ONGOING STAFF TRAINING

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.

Staff training includes ongoing eligibility certification for free or reduced price meals.

PARENT NOTIFICATION:

The food service department will send a bi-weekly email notification to the parent/guardian when a student's balance is reduced to \$7.50 reminding them to replenish the account. When a student's account is overdrawn, the food service department will contact the parent/guardian by phone, email, and/or postal mail asking for the money owed. Building principals will also contact parents/guardians as deemed necessary by individual circumstances.

PARENT OUTREACH:

Staff will communicate with parents/ guardians with five or more meal charges to determine eligibility for free or reduced price meals.

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.

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 child to have insufficient funds, offering any other assistance that is appropriate.

MINIMIZING STUDENT DISTRESS:

School will not publicly identify or stigmatize any student on the line or discuss any outstanding meal debt in the presence of any other students.

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

Schools 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.

Schools will not take any action directed at a pupil to collect unpaid school meal fees.

Schools will deal directly with parents/guardians regarding unpaid school meal fees.

ONGOING ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION:

School staff will conduct direct certification with NYSSIS or using NYSED Roster Upload to maximize free eligibility. NYSED provides updated direct certification data monthly.

School staff will provide parents/guardians with free and reduced price application and instructions at the beginning of each school year in school enrollment packet.

Schools using electronic meal application will provide an explanation of the process in the school enrollment packet and instructions on how to request a paper application at no cost.

Schools will provide at least two additional free and reduced price applications throughout the school year to families identified as owing meal charges.

Schools will use administrative prerogative judiciously, only after using exhaustive efforts to obtain a completed application from the parent/guardian only with available information on family size and income that falls within approvable guidelines.

Schools will coordinate with the foster, homeless, migrant, runaway coordinators at least monthly to certify eligible students.

Account Funds

Students/Parents/Guardians may pay for meals in advance via myschoolbucks.com or with a check payable to Brewster Central School District. Further details are available on our webpage at www.brewsterschools.org. Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a child 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.

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. Parents/guardians will be notified of options regarding funds left in students' accounts.

Unclaimed Funds must be requested within one school year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the Brewster Central School District Food Service Program.

Free and Reduced Price Food Services

The Board has entered into an agreement with the New York State Education Department to participate in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program and/or Special Milk Program to receive commodities donated by the Department of Agriculture and to accept responsibility for providing free and reduced price meals to elementary and secondary students in the schools of the District.

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall have the responsibility to carry out the rules of the School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. The determination of which students are eligible is the responsibility of the Reviewing Official and Verification Official or the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance of the Department of Social Services. Appeals regarding eligibility should be submitted to the Hearing Official of the District.

Free or reduced price meals may be allowed for qualifying students attending District schools upon receipt of a written application from the student's parent or guardian or a "Direct Certification" letter from the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA). Applications will be provided by the School District to all families.

School officials must also determine eligibility for free/reduced meals and milk by using the Direct Certification Matching Process, a dataset supplied by the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, and made available by the State Education Department. Any student receiving federal assistance through Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is automatically eligible for free meals and milk. There is no need for families to complete further applications. School Districts shall notify parents or guardians of such eligibility, giving them the opportunity to decline free meals and milk if they so choose.

Procedures for the administration of the free and reduced price meal program of this School District will be the same as those prescribed in current state and federal laws and regulations.

Food Substitutions for Children with Disabilities

Federal regulations governing the operation of Child Nutrition Programs, Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 require that children with disabilities be offered the opportunity to participate in all academic and nonacademic activities including the school nutrition programs. The District will make reasonable accommodations to those children with disabilities whose disabilities restrict their diets, such as providing substitutions and/or modifications in the regular meal patterns. Such meal substitutions for students with disabilities will be offered at no extra charge. A student with a disability must be provided substitutions in food when that need is supported by a statement signed by a physician attesting to the need for the substitutions and recommending alternate foods.

However, the school food service is not required to provide meal services (for example, School Breakfast Program) to students with disabilities when the meal service is not normally available to the general student body, unless a meal service is required under the student's individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 Accommodation Plan as mandated by a physician's written instructions.

Food Substitutions for Nondisabled Children

Though not required, the District will also allow substitutions for non-disabled children who are unable to consume the regular meal because of medical or other special dietary needs if the request is supported by a statement signed by a recognized medical authority. The District may also allow substitutions for fluid milk with a non-dairy beverage that is nutritionally equivalent (as established by the Secretary of Agriculture) to fluid milk and meets nutritional standards for students who are unable to consume fluid milk because of medical or other special dietary needs if the request is supported by a statement signed by a recognized medical authority or by the student's parent/legal guardian.

HACCP-Based Food Safety Program

Schools participating in the National School Lunch and/or School Breakfast programs are required to implement a food safety program based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles. The District must develop a written food safety program for each of its food preparation and service facilities that is based on either traditional HACCP principles or the "Process Approach" to HACCP. (The "Process Approach" simplifies traditional HACCP by grouping foods according to preparation process and applying the same control measures to all menu items within the group, rather than developing an HACCP plan for each item.) Regardless of the implementation option that is selected, the District's written food safety program must also include:

- a) Critical control points and critical limits;
- b) Monitoring procedures;
- c) Corrective actions;
- d) Verification procedures;
- e) Recordkeeping requirements; and
- f) Periodic review and food safety program revision

Ref:

Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, PL 108-265

Child Nutrition Act 1966, 42 USC Section 1771 et seq.

Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act 1946, 42 USC Section 1751 et seq.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 USC Section 794 et seq.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20 USC Sections 1400-1485

7 CFR Parts 15B, 210 and 220

Education Law Sections Education Law 305(14)(a)902(b), 915, 918, 1604(28), 1709(22), 1709(23) and 2503(9)(a)

8 NYCRR Sections 200.2(b)(1) and 200.2(b)(2)

Social Services Law Section 95

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BREWSTER CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT