

SAINT AMELIA SCHOOL 2999 EGGERT ROAD TONAWANDA NEW YORK.

Meal Charge and Prohibition against Meal Shaming Policy Adopted Sept. 1, 2018

I. Purpose

The goal of the *Saint Amelia School Cafeteria* 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 insure compliance with federal requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program and, 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 *Saint Amelia School Cafeteria* 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 Saint Amelia School Cafeteria 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.

II. 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.

Reduced Meal Benefit - Reduced eligible students will be allowed to receive a breakfast of their choice for \$.25 and lunch of their choice for \$.25 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.

Full Pay Students - Students will pay for meals at the school's published paid meal rate each day which is \$1.25 for breakfast and \$2.25 for lunch. 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. Most recently done September 2018.
- Staff training includes ongoing eligibility certification for free or reduced price meals.

PARENT NOTIFICATION:

- Parents/guardians will be notified that a student's meal card or account balance is exhausted and has accrued meal charges within 5 days of the charge and then every 14 day thereafter. These notifications will be send by e-mail and then followed up with a phone call if no responses have been received.

PARENT OUTREACH:

- The cafeteria manager and the committee of Free and Reduced Lunch Applications will communicate with parents/guardians with five or more meal charges to determine eligibility for free or reduced price meals.
- Saint Amelia office 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.

Saint Amelia Lunch Reviewer or Principal 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:

- Saint Amelia 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.
- Saint Amelia School 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.
- Saint Amelia School will not take any action directed at a pupil to collect unpaid school meal fees.

- Saint Amelia School will deal directly with parents/guardians regarding unpaid school meal fees.

ONGOING ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION:

- Saint Amelia School staff will conduct direct certification with NYSSIS or using NYSED Roster Upload to maximize free eligibility. NYSED provides updated direct certification data monthly.
- Saint Amelia 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.
- Saint Amelia School will provide at least two additional free and reduced price applications throughout the school year to families identified as owing meal charges.
- Saint Amelia School 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.
- Saint Amelia School will coordinate with the foster, homeless, migrant, runaway coordinators to certify eligible students. School liaisons required for homeless, foster, and migrant students shall coordinate with the nutrition department to make sure such students receive free school meals, in accordance with federal law.

Students/Parents/Guardians may pay for meals in advance via *myschoolbucks.com* or with a check payable to *Saint Amelia School Cafeteria*. Further details are available on our webpage at *www.stameliaschool.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. Students who are graduating at the end of the year will have their remaining money transferred to a sibling's account.

Unclaimed Funds must be requested within one school year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the *Saint Amelia School* Food Service Program.