

RSU 26 School Lunch Payment/Charge Policy

Studies prove that children are more successful in school if they receive appropriate nutritional meals throughout the day. To that end, RSU 26 participates in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and National School Breakfast Program (NSBP), administered through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and overseen by the Maine Department of Education Child Nutrition Services. Proper nutrition is essential for growing bodies and developing brains. It also assists students in reaching their full academic and physical potential.

Definitions:

“Debiting” means an expense that draws down a positive balance established in the designated school online payment system

“charging” refers to any and all forms of exchange where there is a verbal agreement for future payment of a meal after service of the meal

A. At the beginning of each school year, the RSU 26 will provide the parents/guardians of district students written information describing the district’s Food Service Program and policies. Staff and administration who are associated with enforcing this policy will also be provided a copy, and a copy will be posted on the district website.

B. The district is responsible for ordering the food and liquids served as well as maintaining accountability for related costs. For this reason, there is a cost to the student for each meal served. There is a Free and Reduced food service program (F/R FSP) for eligible students.

C. Students always have the option of bringing their own lunch.

D. Students intending to purchase a meal (breakfast or lunch) produced by the school’s kitchen staff are required to pay the established price as approved by the School Board.

E. Students can purchase their meal one of two ways: (1) with cash or (2) by debiting the individual student lunch account. Payment is due at the time of purchase.

F. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to maintain an appropriate balance in the student’s lunch account.

G. Parents/Guardians can deposit funds into the student’s lunch account in four ways:

- 1) Sending/delivering cash or checks to the student’s school administration in care of the Food Services. Checks should be made payable to RSU 26 Food Services.
- 2) Checks can be mailed to: RSU 26 Food Director, 10 Goodridge Drive, Orono ME

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\$25.00 fee will be charged for returned checks.

- 3) Online deposits can be made after setting up an account at the designated school online payment system. A link is provided on the District's web page under School Lunch Service. Instructions are provided for a parent/guardian to be able to set up and access their student's account.
- 4) Cash payments can be made at the point of sale in the cafeteria.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to keep track of their student's charges and to be in touch with the school's food service office if there is a question. Parents/guardians can monitor their student's account online by creating an account with the designated online school payment system

H. No student shall ever be denied a meal for lunch or breakfast due to inability to pay. The meal provided shall be as defined by USDA regulations. Students may be asked to add an item to their tray to ensure the meal meets the requirements as the district does not allow charging of ala carte items as defined under the following heading "I. Ala Carte option".

I. Ala Carte option- Ala carte items are items offered in addition to the main meal can be debited or paid with cash but **cannot** be charged. This includes but is not limited to second portions, side entrees, or items served that are not part of the main meal. Ala carte must be paid for with cash in hand or can be deducted from a prepaid account as long as a positive balance remains. A student wishing to buy just a milk as they have brought a meal from home must pay full price for the milk. This is true even if the student participates in the free/reduced program. Students in the F/R program are approved by Federal Regulations for the meal only and cannot choose just milk. Students with a negative balance shall not be allowed to charge ala carte items until their balance is paid in full.

J. No student will be denied food as a disciplinary measure.

K. The District's efforts to collect on overdue accounts will conform to the following guidelines:

- 1) Weekly balance reminders sent out by email and/or the school notification system
- 2) Phone calls from the food service school administration team and/or School Messenger Service
- 3) Periodic letters sent home in the mail to the address on file
- 4) Communication will be directly to the parent/guardian about debt on account unless directly inquired by the student concerning individual debt on account
- 5) District will make every attempt to work out a payment plan upon request to help pay down debt on account
- 6) In all cases, the administration will assist households with applying for eligibility for the F/R FSP. All school meal personnel will handle debt situations with as much

privacy and respect as possible. All free and reduced meal status information is strictly confidential.

L. At the end of the year student balances roll over to the next year (both positive & negative). Parents of students leaving the district or graduating may request a refund of funds for their students' account in writing to the Food Service Director. Any unclaimed funds after 1 year will become the property of the food service program.

M. The Superintendent or designee is responsible for the development of the process, procedure, and regulations necessary to implement this policy.

Adopted 10/20/18

Revised 10/15/19