

# DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

## POLICY

**JQ**

### Student Food Services Accounts

The Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee establishes the following goals:

- To establish a consistent district policy regarding the method of payment for meals, charge availability, and collection methods for charges in the district's meal program.
- To ensure that the parents/guardians are aware of their responsibility for making timely payments.

### ADMINISTRATION OF POLICY

The district administration is responsible for ensuring that the Food Services accounts are properly managed and accurately reported. The administration will closely monitor student school meal accounts with the goal of having all accounts in good standing, thus eliminating negative balances and delinquent accounts.

Parents/guardians will be strongly encouraged to make payments via the online payment center. By registering for an account, parent(s)/guardians can choose to receive e-mail alerts for low balances, set up automatic deposits to their student's account or schedule payments to add funds to their student's account. The district administration will provide annual notice of how to access the online payment center. There will be a minimal fee for using the online payment center charged by the third party contractor. This fee does not benefit the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District.

### DEFINITIONS

- Good standing – a balance in the account of \$0.00 or more
- Negative balance (deficit accounts) – a balance in the account less than \$0.00
- Delinquent – an account which has a negative balance and no response to notices sent from the district or no payments have been received from the student or their parents/guardians for 14 days after first notice.
- A la carte – additional items in addition to the standard meal that may be purchased.

### STUDENT ACCOUNTS

Under no circumstances will a student be denied a lunch. However, only students with an account in good standing may charge a la carte items to their account. Students with a negative account balance may purchase a la carte items with cash. Students with a delinquent account balance will not be allowed to purchase a la carte items until the student's account is in good standing. "Good standing" for the purchase of a la carte items is defined as an account with a zero or positive balance.

### Blocks on Accounts

Parents/guardians may contact, in writing, the Food Services Director to place a block on their student's account to prohibit the purchase of a la carte items or to set a dollar cap for daily spending.

## Refunds

- For any student who has withdrawn, a written request for a refund of any funds remaining in the student's account must be submitted.
- For students who are graduating, a refund may be issued with a written request or funds can be transferred to a sibling's account with a written request.

## Remaining Balances

Any positive balance may:

- Remain on account to be used in the following school year,
- Be transferred to a sibling's account, or
- Be refunded to the parents/guardians with written request.
- After six (6) months, unclaimed funds will become the property of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District, Food Services Department.

## Deficit Accounts

When the student account deficit exceeds the cost of ten lunches, the Food Services Director or designee:

- Will mail a letter and/or send an e-mail to the parents/guardians requesting immediate payment.
- Will, if applicable, assist the family in applying for free or reduced price lunch.

If the balance continues to escalate, and if there are no mitigating factors and the parents/guardians have not made any payments in an effort to reduce the negative balance or fails to bring the student's account into good standing (having a zero or positive balance) within fourteen (14) days of first deficit notice, the administration will deem the account delinquent and may take legal action for payment.

If a student's account is not in good standing at the end of the school year, the administration may take any action allowed under Massachusetts General Law.

If a senior's account is not in good standing as of May 1st, the administration may prohibit the student from participation in senior activities.

First Reading: September 9, 2015

Second Reading and Adoption: September 23, 2015

Proposed for Amendment

First Reading: November 9, 2016

Second Reading and Adoption: January 11, 2017

Proposed for Amendment

First Reading: March 28, 2018

Second Reading and Adoption: April 10, 2018