

4011 - MEAL PAYMENT DELINQUENCY POLICY

I. PURPOSE/POLICY:

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures at Odyssey Charter School, Inc. There is a fine balance that needs to be attained between the solvency of the food service program and the nutritional needs of students. The goals of this policy are:

- To ensure that all students have a healthy meal and that no child goes hungry.
- To treat all students with dignity and confidentiality in the serving line regarding meal accounts.
- To support positive and clear communication among staff, administrators, teachers, students and parent/guardian.
- To establish fair practices that can be used throughout the school district.
- To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal payments and to promote self-responsibility of the student.
- To establish a consistent practice regarding charges and collection of charges.

II. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

The Food Service Director and/or NSLP Coordinator will maintain responsibility for charge records and notifying the student's parent/guardian regarding any outstanding debts.

III. ADMINISTRATION:

1. Prepayment of meals is required. You can establish a meal credit on your child's lunch account through pre-payments. Each meal eaten will be deducted from this pre-paid account. It is your responsibility to ensure the account is funded and current.
2. When the students' lunch account gets to a \$5.00 balance a note will be sent home, email and phone call will be sent to the parent/guardian informing them of the status of their child's lunch account.
3. If a student does not have adequate money in their student account or in hand to cover the cost of the meal at the time of service, students may choose a meal from required component contributions to create a reimbursable meal. No student may charge an a la carte item.
4. Students approved for free meals cannot be denied a meal, even if they have a negative balance on other cafeteria purchases.
5. If a student does not have adequate funds in their meal account at time of service for over 5 days, the school reserves the right to serve an alternative meal.
6. If payment is not made, the School will contact the household and review with them their responsibility to provide meals for their student(s) and to stay current on their meal account.

*The school is required to provide a written copy of this policy to all households and transfer households.

7. The School will work with families to establish repayment plans either weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. Unpaid meal charges may be carried over at the end of the school year as a delinquent debt and collection efforts continue into the next school year.
8. The School will provide free and reduced meal applications will be available during registration and at any time during the school year.

IV. BAD DEBT

1. Odyssey Charter School, Inc. participates in the CEP food program which serves breakfast and lunch at no charge and eliminates the collection of free, reduced priced and paid student meal applications. In the event, Odyssey Charter School, Inc. does not participate in the CEP program, they have established a process to manage and mitigate bad debt from unpaid meal charges while ensuring compliance with federal regulations. Odyssey Charter School, Inc. prohibits the use of Food Service funds to cover bad debt.
2. Procedures:
 - i. Families are notified of meal payment policies at the start of each school year and provided options for payment plans or free/reduced meal applications in the event that Odyssey Charter School, Inc. does not participate in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)
 - ii. Unpaid meal charges are tracked in a separate ledger, with monthly statements sent to responsible parties.
 - iii. After 60 days of non-payment, accounts are classified as bad debt and referred to Food Servicer Director for collection efforts.
 - iv. Collection attempts (e.g., letters, calls) are documented; if unsuccessful after 120 days, the debt is written off and funded by non-federal sources.
 - v. Write-offs are approved by Principal/School Administrator and is reported to the governing body semi-annually, if applicable.
3. Documentation: A bad debt log records all unpaid charges, collection efforts, and write-offs, maintained per the records retention policy. (4010-FOOD SERVICES)

TRAINING: All areas of the Food Service Policy and any other required training for Food Service will be provided to the following staff: Food Service Director, Food Service Managers, Food Service Workers.

Any questions regarding payment options or any Café services should be directed to the Food Service Manager at 321-733-0442 ext. 133 (or) 321-345-4117 ext. 1148

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