

Revised January, 2019

KEYSTONE ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

MEAL POLICY

I. STATEMENT AND SCOPE OF POLICY

In recognition that proper nutrition is important to students' well being, growth, development and readiness to learn, the Board of Trustees of Keystone Academy Charter School has contracted with The Nutrition Group to provide students, on a voluntary basis, to receive a nutritionally balanced lunch which, for eligible students, is free or at reduced cost, and which is available to other students at very modest cost. The Board recognizes that emergencies may arise when students will not have their lunch money or an adequate balance in their meal account to purchase a meal. However, the Board expects that all parents/guardians of students who are ineligible for free meals to pay for their students' meals, at full or reduced price as may be applicable, through the payment management system or cash purchases.

Therefore, to ensure that students do not go hungry and are treated in a consistent, discrete and respectful manner, to promote responsible parent/guardian behavior for providing funds for meal purchases and all outstanding balances, and to minimize the significant financial burden on Keystone Academy Charter School resulting from unpaid or delinquent meal accounts, the Board of Trustees hereby adopts, as amended, the following Meal Policy.

II. AUTHORITY

The food service program shall comply with all federal laws, regulations and guidelines established by the Child Nutrition Division of the United States Department of Agriculture. The food service program also shall comply with all applicable state regulations, guidelines and laws, including Act 55 amending Section 1337 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code to prohibit "lunch shaming."

III. CONFIDENTIALITY

A student's meal status always shall be kept strictly confidential. The identity of each student with a meal account shall be protected. Overt identification of students based on free, reduced price or delinquent account balance is prohibited.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY

Subject to annual review by the Board of Trustees, the Meal Policy shall be implemented by the Chief Executive Officer, who may delegate supervision and operation of the school meal program to the Principal. The Principal shall ensure that under no circumstances may

communications regarding a student's meal status be directed to, or responsibility be placed, upon any student for a negative or delinquent meal account balance; rather, all communications and collection efforts, as may be necessary, shall be directed to adults in the household exclusively.

Unless a student is eligible for a free meal, parents/guardians are responsible for providing funds for meal purchases and to cover negative balances incurred by their student.

V. MEALS AND CHARGES

1. Students are not allowed to charge snacks, a-la-carte or other nonprogram foods when their individual meal accounts lack sufficient funds to cover the cost of the items.

2. A student may charge up to a maximum of five (5) meals on a temporary credit basis, at which time his or her parent/guardian will be notified of the debt and will be given ten (10) school days to pay the amount due. If the parent/guardian fails to make full payment by the end of this period, a second notice will be sent to the parent/guardian advising that no additional meals may be charged on a temporary credit basis beginning one (1) week from the date of the second notice unless payment is made in full.

3. Notwithstanding the above, any student who requests a school meal, though lacking the money to pay for it, or who has a negative balance in his/her school meal account, shall be provided with the meal, unless his/her parent/guardian has specifically provided written notice to the school to withhold a school program meal.

4. No meals will be denied to students who are eligible for free or reduced-price meals, despite having an unpaid meal account balance or having money "in hand" to pay for the current meal.

5. Public identification or stigmatization of any student who cannot pay for a school meal or who has a negative school meal account balance is prohibited. However, it shall not constitute public identification or stigmatization of a student for the school to restrict privileges and activities of students who owe money for school meals, if those same restrictions apply to students who owe money for other school-related purposes.

6. No student who cannot pay for a school meal may be required to perform chores or other work to pay for the meal, unless chores or other work are required of all students regardless of their ability or inability to pay for a school meal.

7. No student shall be required to discard a school meal after it was served to the student due to inability to pay for the meal or a negative meal account balance.

8. Food services staff must report to the Principal or administrative designee any suspicion that a student's family is abusing this policy including the privilege of meal charging. If a student repeatedly comes to school with no lunch and no lunch money, food service employees must report this to the Principal or administrative designee, who may contact the proper authorities if abuse or neglect is suspected.

VI. NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES FOR LOW AND NEGATIVE MEAL ACCOUNT BALANCES

1. Low or negative balances must never be satisfied by cash from a student that would deny him or her the ability to purchase that day's meal.

2. No later than the end of each month, food service staff must provide the Principal or administrative designee with a list of the name and grade level of students: (i) whose meal account balance is \$5.00 or below, (ii) who have begun charging meals and/or have already accumulated 5 meals on temporary credit, and/or (iii) who have a negative balance. Upon receipt of such list, the Principal or administrative designee will ensure that notification is given to the parent/guardian of each student on the list, as early and/or as often as may be necessary, to resolve issues of low or negative meal account balances.

3. At the end of each month, the Principal or administrative designee will send an invoice or bill to each parent/guardian of a student with a negative meal account balance, with a letter advising the parent/guardian to contact the Principal or administrative designee for payment or to discuss installment payments if helpful to the family. The letter also will encourage the family that pre-payment of meals, if possible, with regular monitoring of meal account balances, helps to maintain daily nutritious mid-day meals to their student to fuel readiness to learn.

4. Because student nutrition programs are subject to confidentiality and disclosure requirements, payment reminders will be communicated only by authorized persons.

VII. REQUIRED SETTLEMENT OF MEAL ACCOUNTS, COLLECTION OF DELINQUENT MEAL ACCOUNT DEBT, AND UNUSED FUNDS

All accounts must be settled before a student leaves Keystone Academy Charter School or by the end of the school year. A final invoice and letter will be sent home approximately a week before notification that, unless paid in full, report cards will be held. Furthermore, the letter will advise that outstanding debt is subject to referral for collection.

Because Keystone Academy Charter School is required to take reasonable steps to collect delinquent school meal debt, all unpaid meal account balances that remain the end of the school year (beyond June 30) shall be regarded as delinquent debt. The Principal or administrative designee shall contact parent/guardian by least one (1) written correspondence to arrange for payment within thirty (30) days. The delinquent debt will carry over to the new school year: (i) to allow individual families who have made a good faith effort towards payment to establish longer repayment plans, or (ii) for Keystone Academy Charter School to continue collection efforts, including referral to an outside agency or authority, regardless of a student's continued enrollment at Keystone Academy Charter School or enrollment elsewhere. Parent/guardian may incur collection charges in addition to the outstanding balance.

At the end of the school year, households approved for reduced price meal benefits must be processed a refund of any unused funds in their account.

VIII. DISTRIBUTION

This Meal Policy must be communicated in writing to all households each school year and to all households transferring to the school during the year. The policy also will be made available through other means such as, but not limited to, the school website.

This Meal Policy additionally shall be disseminated to staff members who are responsible for policy enforcement.

IX. RECORD KEEPING

Keystone Academy Charter School shall maintain proper documentation of the methods used to communicate this policy to households and staff responsible for policy enforcement, and to demonstrate how the policy was implemented.

The types of documents that shall be maintained include:

- Evidence of efforts to collect unpaid meal charges in accordance with the policy;
- Evidence that collection efforts fell within the timeframe and methods established by the policy;
- Financial documentation showing when the unpaid meal charge became an operating loss; and
- Evidence that the funds written off as bad debt were restored to NSFSA from non-federal sources.