

Business/Non-Instructional Operations

Food Service

Meal Charging Policy

Waterford Public Schools recognizes that nutrition is essential to a student's mental health, physical health, and academic growth. The goals of this policy are to maintain the financial stability of the program, continue to provide nutritious meals, encourage parents/guardians to take responsibility for all outstanding balances, and to treat all students in a consistent and respectful manner. All students enrolled in school may receive school meals.

Waterford School Dining and Nutrition Service Department will make accommodations for students that do not have money in their student account or have forgotten their money at time of service by providing a full reimbursable breakfast and/or lunch that meets the USDA national school breakfast/lunch program requirements. This policy will be posted on the School Districts website.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on charging procedures for meals served at Waterford Public Schools. Through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP), the Waterford School District is able to provide nourishing meals needed to engage in active learning during the school day to students.

Unpaid account balances impose a financial burden on the food services department and in turn on the school district. The CSDE regulations place this liability on the district at the end of each fiscal year and require the School Food Service Authorities (SFA's) be made whole by the District for any outstanding debt. To minimize the impact of outstanding debt on the district due to meal charges, the following procedures will be implemented.

Payment Options

Individual student meal account numbers shall be established by Waterford Schools. A student's meal account balance remains with the student until the student is no longer enrolled in the District.

All students are offered the opportunity and parents are encouraged to apply for the free or reduced meal price benefits based on their financial status. The application can be found at www.waterfordschools.org. Applications are also available in the main office of each school. Bilingual copies are available upon request by calling the Schools Dining & Nutrition Services Director at 860-444-5862.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to pre-pay for their child(ren)'s meals through the town's online payment system, www.mypaymentsplus.com where student purchases can be monitored, and parameters set on their accounts. Parents/guardians can also pre-pay for meals by sending in cash.

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or check (made payable to: Waterford Food Service) to the Food Service Department, their school cafeteria or pay at the time of service. We recommend parents maintain a \$10.00 minimum balance in each student's account.

If a student comes to lunch with a positive balance on their account and not enough money to cover the cost of the purchase, a meal of the student's choice will be provided, and the student will be informed that they are borrowing money that day to pay for their breakfast/lunch. Extra meals or a la carte items can only be purchased if the student has funds on his/her account or presents payment at the point of sale.

If a student has money to purchase a reduced price or paid meal at the time of the meal service, the child must be provided a meal. School Food Service Authorities may not use the money to repay previously unpaid charges if the child intended to use the money to purchase that day's meal.

Meal Charging Procedures

Parents will be notified that any school meal debt accrued prior to the schools' determination that the student(s) is eligible for free or reduced lunch remains the parent's responsibility. Additionally, parents are responsible for charges that place the student in a negative status.

No charges are allowed for extras (second meals) or a la carte foods on any negative balance accounts or accounts with a zero balance.

NO CHARGING after May 1st: No senior high school student shall be allowed to carry a negative balance and must pay for purchases daily according to their status: Full Pay or Reduced. Qualified students receiving free meals would be required to pay for a second meal or a la carte sales.

Students Receiving Free/Reduced Price Meal Benefits

Students who are eligible to receive free/reduced meals may receive one complete breakfast and one complete lunch per day. In order to receive the free/reduced meal, students must take all required meal components that make up a nutritional meal in accordance with the NSLP and SBP requirements. Extra meals or a la carte items may only be purchased if the student has funds on his or her account or presents payment at the point of sale. Full pay prices vary according to school and are posted on our website and at the POS (Point of Sale). Reduced price breakfast costs \$0.30 and lunch costs \$0.40. If the student does not have adequate funds to purchase their meal at the point of purchase, their account will be charged for the cost of that meal. Student's parents or guardians may be notified by email, phone call, or www.mypaymentsplus.com of low or negative balances. Families with students who are eligible for reduced price meals that are struggling to make payments are encouraged to contact the Director of Food Services at 860-444-5862.

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Families in need of food assistance may find a listing of local food pantries on the Food Services page on our District website; www.waterfordschools.org. Listing can also be found at <https://www.waterfordct.org/waterford-youth-and-family-services/pages/waterford-community-food-bank> or <https://www.foodpantries.org/ci/ct-waterford>. Other assistance may also be available at: <https://portal.ct.gov/dss/SNAP/Supplemental-Nutrition-Assistance-Program---SNAP>.

Account Balances

Parents/guardians are encouraged to set up the online low balance alert on their child's My Payments Plus account. Students that do not have available funds will be charged according to student's status. Principals and parents/guardians will be notified by email of an excessive negative balance.

Any family that falls into a negative balance will receive a phone call from the School Dining and Nutrition Services Director to discuss payment of the outstanding account balance. If the negative account balance is not resolved after the discussion, the family will be encouraged to apply for free or reduced meal benefits.

If funds are not collected, the student will be able to charge lunch for up to ten (10) school days. If full payment of charges is not received or a repayment plan set up (a free & reduced application will be offered) by the end of ten (10) days, the business manager will be notified. At this time the student will not be able to receive school meals and should bring meals from home until there is a positive balance on the student's account. The Food Service Department will notify the parent/guardian by mail that they are responsible to provide the student with food while at school. Should the parent choose not to make payment arrangements, mandated reporting may be required and determined by the school principal and/or superintendent.

The School Dining and Nutrition Service Director may establish a repayment plan for individual families based on agreed weekly payments for special circumstances approved through the business manager. When officials determine further collection efforts for delinquent debt are useless or too costly, the debt must be classified as "bad debt". The School Dining Director will maintain records of the efforts made to collect unpaid meal charges and if applicable, financial documentation showing when the unpaid meal balance has become an operating loss. The district shall make payments to the food service department at the end of the fiscal year for outstanding student unpaid meal charges if collection efforts are unsuccessful.

Student Fees, Fines, Charges or Refunds

Any Bank fees incurred will be added to outstanding meal debt. This will apply to any payments made by check that are returned to the district by the bank with the notice of "insufficient funds" (NSF). All accounts must be settled at the end of the school year.

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When a check is returned for insufficient funds (NSF) a letter will be sent to inform the parent(s) from the Food Service Director. Payment for the NSF check must be in the form of a cashier's

check, cash or money order. Payment must be received within ten (10) days of the date of the letter and include monies owed plus any bank penalty fee and will be made payable to: Waterford Food Service. Send to: School Dining & Nutrition Office 15 Rope Ferry Road, Waterford CT.

If an NSF payment is not received for balances owed with no response from the parent or guardian, the business manager may take over collection actions.

Second requests will be sent from the business manager. Once the town has received an NSF check from the bank, the parent will no longer be allowed to pay by personal check; only cash, a cashier's check or money order will be accepted.

Students with unused credit in their accounts at the point of disenrollment or graduation will be transferred to a siblings account.

Refunds are available upon a written request or email. Funds may also be donated. Gifts or donated funds are accepted for the purpose of offsetting delinquent student meal accounts. Donations will be applied to outstanding debt owed by reduced status students first.

Withdrawn Students: For any student who is withdrawn, a written request or email must be submitted with a forwarding address if applicable.

Funds can also be transferred to a sibling's account with a written request, e-mail or verbal request at any time.

Unclaimed Funds: All refunds must be requested within one year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the Waterford Food Service Department.

Staff Meal Purchases

Staff may set up an account for meal purchases by calling The School Dining & Nutrition Services office at 860-444-5862.

With exception of staff contractually entitled to daily meals, staff and faculty are expected to pay for all meals received from the school food service department. Staff and faculty may also purchase any of our student a la carte items using funds on their accounts or cash at the point of sale. Staff will not be allowed to charge any meals or student a la carte food items that will cause their account to go into deficit balance.

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USDA Non- Discrimination Statement

In accordance with Federal Civil Rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Civil Rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior credible activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](#) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

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WATERFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Waterford, Connecticut