

Meal Charge Policy

Queen of Heaven School Cafeteria

I. Purpose

The goal of the Queen of Heaven School Cafeteria is to provide students access to nutritious no – or low-cost meals each school day.

However, unpaid charges place a large financial burden on our school. The purpose of this policy is to insure compliance with federal requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program, and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances to ensure that the student is not distressed or embarrassed.

Intent of this policy is to establish procedures to address unpaid meal charges throughout the Queen of Heaven School Cafeteria. The provisions of this policy pertain to regular priced school lunch and snack meals only. The Queen of Heaven School Cafeteria provides this policy as a courtesy to those students in the event that they forget or lose their lunch money. Charging of items outside of the reimbursable meals (a la carte items, adult meals, etc.) is expressly prohibited.

II. Policy

- Free Meal Benefit-Free eligible students will be allowed to receive a free lunch each day. A la carte purchases must be paid/prepaid. An Extra Entrée is available for \$1.00.
- Reduced Meal Benefit – Reduced eligible students will be allowed to receive a lunch at no charge each day. An Extra Entrée is available for \$1.00.
- Full Pay Students – Students will pay for meals at the school’s published paid meal rate each day. *For 2019 – 2020 the student rate is \$3.00. Extra Entrée is available for \$1.00.* If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the administration will investigate the situation more closely and take further action as needed. If financial hardship exists, parents and families are encouraged to apply for free or reduced price lunches for their child if applicable. A student will be allowed to charge a maximum of 3 meals to their account after the balance reaches zero. The charge meals offered to students will be reimbursable meals that are available to all students.
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for meal payment to the food service program. Discreet notices of low or deficit balances will be sent to parents/guardians as needed or at the end of each month.
- Students/Parents/Guardians may pay for meals monthly in advance via Cash or with a check payable to Queen of Heaven School Cafeteria. Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a child maybe without meal money on any given day. Monthly lunch prices are listed on the Queen of Heaven Lunch Menu. Any remaining funds for a particular student may/will be carried over to the next month. Any credit balance at the end of the school year will be carried over to the next school year.R

- Refunds for withdrawn, and graduating students; a written or e-mailed request for a refund of any money remaining in their account. Students who are graduating at the end of the year with siblings still in the school will be applied to those students the following year.
- Unclaimed Funds must be requested within 5 days. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the Queen of Heaven Food Service Program.
- Balances Owed – collection of owed balances will follow the policies and procedures set by the school.

At the end of each month (first day of following month) a statement will be sent home with each child. If more than 1 child in the school, the statement will go home with the youngest child.

Payments are expected promptly (within 3 days). Please notify the School Cafeteria if you are unable to pay within the 3 days to make other arrangements.

Lunch Charges should be paid the next day. After 3 days – Parents will be notified by e-mail or notice sent home in sealed envelope with child.

- **Parent Outreach:**

At the beginning of each school year the staff will provide a free, printed meal application in every school enrollment packet.

If the parent/guardian needs assistance with the application, they may contact the school SFA directly for help in establishing eligibility for free or reduced-price meals for their children.

The SFA may in accordance with 7 CFR 245.6(d) complete and file an application for a free or reduced meals for a student if the SFA becomes aware that a student who has not submitted a meal application is eligible for free or reduced price meals.

Staff will communicate with parents/guardians with five or more meal charges to determine eligibility for free or reduced price meals.

- **Ongoing Eligibility Certification:**

School staff will conduct direct certification with SYSSIS or using NYSED Roster Upload to maximize free eligibility. NYSED provides updated direct certification data monthly.

School staff will provide parents/guardians with free and reduced price application and instructions at the beginning of each school year in school enrollment packet.

School will provide at least two additional free and reduced price applications throughout the school year to families identified as owing meal charges.

School will coordinate with the foster, homeless, migrant, runaway coordinators to certify eligible students. School liaisons required for homeless, foster, and migrant students shall coordinate with the nutrition department to make sure such students receive free school meals, in accordance with federal law.