

Monarch School of New England Meal Charging Policy

I. Federal Requirement

The purpose of this policy is to address the need for school food authorities (SFAs) participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) to institute and clearly communicate a meal charge policy, which would include, if applicable, the availability of alternate meals. Because all students in participating schools may receive reimbursable school meals, all SFAs must have a policy in place for children who are participating at the reduced price or paid rate, but either do not have money in their account or in hand to cover the cost of the meal at the time of service. Such a policy ensures that school food service professionals, school administrators, families, and students have a shared understanding of expectations in these situations.

This requirement is referred to a “policy,” but whether this is referred to as a “policy” or “standard practice” is at the discretion of the SFA. Regardless of terminology is used, the policy or standard practice must consist of a written document explaining how the SFA will handle situations where children eligible to receive reduced price or paid meals do not have money in their account or in hand to cover the cost of their meal at the time of service. The policy or standard practice must be implemented throughout the SFA.

You can find more information about this US Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) requirement at: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/unpaid-meal-charges>.

II. PURPOSE OF POLICY:

The purpose of this policy is to establish consistent meal account procedures throughout the district. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the food service department. The goals of this standard of practice are:

- To treat all students with dignity regarding meal accounts
- To support positive situations with district staff, district business policies, student and parent/guardian to the maximum extent possible
- To establish policies that are age appropriate
- To encourage parent/guardian to assume the responsibility of meal
- To establish a consistent district policy regarding charges and collection of charges

III. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY:

- The Director of Finance is responsible for maintaining charge records and notifying the student’s parent/guardian. Due to the specific population of children we serve

all meal billing will be managed by the parent/guardian regardless of the age of the child.

IV. ADMINISTRATION

1. Families are encouraged to apply for free and reduced price meal benefit.
2. Families are billed at the end of each month.
3. Families will be notified of the school Unpaid Meal Charge Policy in writing before the school year begins and with each new transfer student. This policy will also be posted on the Food Service Website.
4. **Elementary students:** Invoices will be sent to parents on a monthly basis.
5. **Middle School students:** Invoices will be sent to parents on a monthly basis.
6. **High School students:** Invoices will be sent to parent on a monthly basis.
7. We never deny a child a meal, regardless of their ability to pay.
8. We do not submit delinquent or unpaid lunch accounts for collection. We will wait as long as it takes, and if necessary, write it off as a bad debt.