



Meal Charge and Alternate Meal Administrative Procedures

I. Purpose

Mountain West Montessori Academy (“the School”) participates in the National School Lunch Program (“NSLP”). The School provides meals to its students pursuant to these programs and offers free or reduced price meals to eligible students. Participating students who are not eligible for free or reduced price meals may receive meals at the School at the normal paid rate.

These procedures address how the School will handle situations where students eligible to receive reduced price or paid rate meals at school do not have money in their account or in hand to pay for the cost of a meal at the time of meal service. These procedures also address, among other things, where families can find assistance with applying for free or reduced price school meals, alternate meals, notification and collection of unpaid meal charges, and how the School will communicate these procedures to families and School personnel.

II. Information about Free or Reduced Price Meals

- A. Prior to or at the beginning of each school year, the School will provide to the parent or guardian of each student:
 - (i) Information about school meals, including prices for the meals and acceptable methods of paying for the meals;
 - (ii) Information about the NSLP, including how students qualify for free or reduced priced meals under the programs; and
 - (iii) An application for free or reduced priced meals under the NSLP.

- B. The School will provide the information and application as follows:
 - (i) The School website provides parents with the current lunch menu, pricing, and links to online lunch payment information as well as free and reduced lunch applications and information. Hard copies are available in the front office upon request.
 - (ii) The School will not provide the information and application at the end of the school year for the next school year, but will provide the information and application on or after July 1 of each year.

- C. Completed applications should be returned to the School as soon as possible, but completed applications will be accepted by the School throughout the year. Parents or guardians should contact Ms. Terra in the front office at (801)566-6962 for questions about or assistance with applying for free or reduced priced school meals.

III. Students Unable to Pay for Meals

- A. Students who are unable to pay for a meal at the time of meal service, either because they don't have sufficient money in their meal account or on their person, will be allowed to charge the meal to their meal account unless their meal account balance is negative in the amount of \$10.00 or more.
- B. Students allowed to charge a meal to their meal account under the terms described above will receive a regular reimbursable meal as opposed to an alternate meal.
- C. This Section does not apply to students who have qualified for free meals under the NSLP, as such students are not required to pay for reimbursable meals at the School.

IV. Alternate Meals

- A. Students whose meal accounts have a negative balance of \$10.00 or more will not be allowed to charge a regular reimbursable meal to their account. Under those circumstances the School will offer such students an alternate meal. The School will not charge such students for an alternate meal. This paragraph does not apply to students who have qualified for free meals under the NSLP, as such students are not required to pay for reimbursable meals at the School and will never be denied a regular reimbursable meal by the School.
- B. Alternate meals may consist of a sandwich and carton of milk or other low-cost entrée.
- C. Alternate meals will be presented in the same manner as regular reimbursable meals, on a lunch tray in the lunch line.

V. Notifications Regarding Balances; Collection Efforts

- A. The School will notify parents or guardians of low meal account balances. When a student's meal account reaches a balance of \$5.00 or lower, the School will notify the student's parent or guardian of the low balance by email and request that payment on the account be made prior to the account reaching a negative balance.
- B. The School will notify parents or guardians of negative meal account balances. When a student's meal account has a negative balance, the School will notify the student's parent or guardian of the negative account balance by phone call and request payment on the account be made as soon as possible.
- C. When a student's meal account reaches a negative balance of at least \$50.00, the School will continue to notify parents or guardians as described above and may also turn the account over to collections.

- D. The School may contact parents or guardians of students with delinquent meal accounts to inquire if the household might be eligible for free or reduced price meal benefits under NSLP.
- E. Ms. Terra at the School is generally responsible for managing meal account balances and balance notifications and can be reached at (801)566-6962 for questions or concerns related to such matters.
- F. Ms. Karen at the School is generally responsible for managing the School's collection efforts and can be reached at (801)566-6962 for questions or concerns related to such matters.
- G. The School will maintain documentation of the balance notifications and collection efforts described above, as this may be requested as part of federal or state audits.
- H. The School will do the following when a student has a positive meal account balance but has left the School (e.g., transferred, entered high school, etc) and will not be returning to the School:
 - (i) Contact the parent or guardian of the student to inquire what he or she wants the School to do with the money (e.g., issue a refund, transfer the money to the meal account of the student's sibling (if any) still attending the School, or apply to other School students' meal accounts who aren't able to pay for their School meals (such as those students who have negative and/or delinquent meal account balance)). The School will attempt to contact the parent or guardian multiple times and will document all contact and attempts to contact the parent or guardian;
 - (ii) If the parent or guardian responds to the School's inquiry, the School will do what the parent or guardian requests with respect to the money in the student's meal account; and
 - (iii) If the parent or guardian does not respond to the School's inquiries within 180 days of the School's first attempt to contact the parent or guardian, the School will apply the money in student's positive meal account balance toward other School students' meal account balances that are negative and/or delinquent.

VI. Communication of Procedures

- A. Prior to or at the beginning of each school year, and upon a student transferring to the School during the school year, the School will provide to the parent or guardian of each student a written copy of these procedures by including them in registration materials and including them in the School's Policies and Procedures manual.
- B. In order to ensure that these procedures are applied consistently and correctly, the School will also annually provide a copy of these procedures to all School personnel who are responsible for or involved in:

- (i) Collecting payment for meals at the time of meal service;
 - (ii) Notifying parents or guardians of low or negative meal account balances;
 - (iii) Collection efforts for delinquent meal accounts;
 - (iv) Distributing these procedures and the information described in Section II;
and
 - (v) Enforcing any aspect of these procedures.
- C. The School will post these procedures on its website and may also choose to provide additional copies to parents or guardians of students whose meal accounts reach a negative balance.
- D. The School will maintain documentation of the communication methods described above, as this may be requested as part of federal or state audits.
- E. Various stakeholders in the School community were involved in developing these communication procedures.

VII. Review of Procedures

- A. The School will review these procedures annually and revise them as it deems necessary.