

**EASTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
EASTON, MA**

File: JO-1

STUDENT LUNCH CHARGE POLICY

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Executive Office of Health And Human Services, USDA Child Nutrition Programs requires municipalities who receive reimbursement to track and document funds and/or charges related to reimbursable meals. It is the responsibility of the food service department to maintain accurate charge records. It is the joint responsibility of the food service department and School Principal to actively and consistently enforce school administration approved collection policies.

Each student is issued a unique Personal Identification Number (PIN) or an Identification card with a photo and barcode. This ensures that the funds intended for school lunch are secure and only the student has access to their lunch account.

School lunch is available to all students. Students may also choose to bring in a lunch from home. Menus are posted on the school's website and allergy information is available.

Parents/guardians have three methods in which to choose to pay or prepay for lunch.

1. Send their child to school with cash for lunch each day
2. Send a check to school to apply funds "on account" (checks may be given to the cashier during lunch or dropped off at the school office)
3. Make a payment online with the current point of service (POS) provider

A fee (amount determined by town Treasurer) will be assessed on checks returned unpaid (insufficient funds or closed account) and the amount deposited to the account will be reversed immediately.

Each method allows the student to maintain a positive balance on their account. Each lunch that is purchased will be deducted from the balance daily. Parents/guardians can choose to apply the funds to the "Meal Account" which allows students to purchase one meal per day or the "General Account" which allows students to purchase lunches or A la Carte items. A la Carte items are snacks and beverages that are not included with lunch. All snacks sold follow the nutritional guidelines on the acceptable snack list approved by the John C. Stalker Institute.

The John C. Stalker Institute of Food and Nutrition (JSI), publishes the "A-List" (or Acceptable List) which was first developed as a resource to find products that meet the Massachusetts Action for Healthy Kids' Massachusetts À la Carte Food & Beverage Standards. This list of products has been revised to reflect the Massachusetts School Nutrition Standards: <http://www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/alist/>.

The school department makes every effort to get needy families access to the federal meal assistance program. Updated meal assistance applications are provided to newly registering students and distributed to all students before school begins through email. These forms are also available at the Easton Food Pantry, the Ames Free Library and are printable from the school website. A new application must be submitted each school year.

In the event that a student arrives at the register with a lunch and/or A la carte items and does not have a way to pay for the food items, the following policy will be applied.

1. A la Carte items may not be charged.
2. Students in Grades 9-12 will be allowed to charge one lunch.
3. Students in Grades K-8 will not be denied a meal.
4. Only one lunch per day may be charged.
5. Students may not purchase A la Carte items if their account has a negative balance.

Students charging a lunch are asked to return the payment on the next school day. If a negative balance remains on the student's account the school will contact the family via phone, email or by postal mail. If the debt is not resolved the Principal may restrict the student from participating in school programs/activities (consequences will be in consideration of grade level).

In order to be in compliance with the Federal Regulation (see below), each school will be required to open a Purchase Order, at the beginning of each fiscal year encumbering the estimated amount of uncollected school lunch debt accrued during the school year. An Invoice will be issued to each school in June by the food service department.

The Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments Regulation 2 CFR Part 225 (formerly OMB Circular A-87) provides the official federal regulations regarding allowable costs for National School Lunch Program funds.

In keeping with these regulations, all school food authorities within the Commonwealth must resolve bad debt at the end of each school year by offsetting bad debt costs incurred by food service operations from sources outside of the non-profit school food service account (such as a general fund). Whether bad debt occurs by policy or by practice, it is not an allowable expense.

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