

MEAL SERVICES

The Board of Education recognizes that the nutrition of district students is an important factor in their educational progress. Therefore, the Kingston City School District is committed to provide the opportunity for all students to access nutritious meals in a cost-effective manner. The district will participate in federally funded school breakfast/lunch programs, will provide free/reduced meal services to qualified district students, and will establish procedures to handle meal charges that are both sensitive to student needs, yet mindful of the fiscal responsibilities of the meal service program. If eligible, the district will provide federally funded meal services during the summer months. The availability of food service offerings during the summer recess will be advertised on the district web site, local social service agencies, and other locations as determined.

Meal Charges

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to ensure that money is deposited in their child's individual meal account and that a positive balance is maintained, or money is sent each day so that the student can purchase meals in school, or children are sent to school with food for lunch. All students will access their individual meal account upon entering their identification number, and the cost of the meal will be deducted from the student's individual meal account.

If parent/guardians make deposits by check and the check is returned for nonpayment, the District may require that all future payments be made either in cash, or by money order or certified check. The parents/guardians will be responsible for reimbursement to the District for any bank charges related to a returned check. All students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 will be permitted to charge meals. No charges will be permitted for snack or a la carte offerings. Adults will not be permitted to charge meals or snacks.

- When a student charges a meal, the date, student's name and amount charged will be noted in a Point of Sale (POS) system at the school.
- It is expected that meal charges will be paid on the following school day.
- If a student accumulates three (3) full meal charges, the student's name and amount charged will be provided to the Principal's Office by the Senior Food Service Helper. The Principal or designee will send a letter home to the parents requesting that payment be made to the cafeteria. The letter will encourage parents to notify the school if the family has emergency circumstances. In addition, the Food Service Office will send negative balance letters home monthly with elementary students, mail letters monthly to secondary students' homes, and will electronically send a negative balance list to all principals.

Free and Reduced Meals

Availability:

Notice of the availability of the free/reduced meal programs will be sent to the homes of students, local media, the local unemployment office, large employers experiencing layoffs in the area from which the district draws its attendance, and will be included on the district web site. Any child who is a member of a family unit whose income is below the federally established scale shall be eligible to receive such services, and families are strongly encouraged to apply. Students who receive free/reduced meals will not be identifiable.

Application:

To apply for the free/reduced price meal program:

- Application forms will be available in the Main Office of each school building and on the district web site, and can be completed and submitted at any time during the year.
- Completed forms must be submitted to the Building Principal of the school which the student attends prior to any determination of eligibility. The Principal will submit completed applications to the building kitchen staff to be delivered to the Food Service Office.
- The Food Service Office will inform the parent/guardian of the eligibility determination within three days of receiving a properly completed application.
- All applications will be kept confidential.
- Upon a written request, denials can be appealed in compliance with federal regulations governing the National School Lunch Program.

Program Options – Free Meals:

School districts have the option, at local expense, to provide free meals to students otherwise eligible for reduced price meals.

Program Options – Direct Certification:

Whenever possible, the district will explore expanding programs to increase the number of families eligible to receive free/reduced meals:

- Direct certification for students in certain households receiving Medicaid benefits (those at or below 133% of the federal poverty level for family size). This data will be provided three times per school year, and will be alongside TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) information. The district will send a notice to those families apprising them of their student's eligibility to participate in the school meal programs without further application. Parents may decline participation by informing the district in writing. If the service is declined, the student will be removed from the eligibility list.
- Children in 'Head Start,' or who have been determined to be homeless, migrant or runaway, or in foster care can be directly certified to participate in the district free and reduced price meal program by virtue of being designated in those status categories. The Superintendent will develop implementing regulations.
- Community Eligibility: If the district can show that the percentage of students eligible for free school meals at any one school, or group of schools, or the entire school district, is at least 40%, the district may elect for the school, schools, or district to participate in the Community Eligibility option. Pursuant to federal law and regulations, the school would provide all students at that school or schools with free breakfast and lunch, pursuant to federal regulations. The district would receive federal reimbursement corresponding to the percentage of eligible students. If the reimbursement received by the district is not sufficient to cover total nonprofit school food service program costs, non-federal funds must be used to pay the difference.

- Pursuant to federal regulations, under the Community Eligibility option, student eligibility is based on household receipt of food assistance (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), income assistance (TANF), or Medicaid benefits (for certain income levels), student participation in Head Start, or recognition of the student as homeless, runaway, migrant, or in foster care.

Families will be notified, in writing, at least annually, prior to the start of school, and on the school web site, of the District's meal services policy.

Ref: 42 USC §1779 (Child Nutrition Act of 1966)
42 USC §§1758(f)(1); 1766(a) (National School Lunch Act)
2 CFR §200.426 (accounting for debt in federal programs)
7 CFR §§210.9 210.12; 210.19; 220.13; 245.5 (accounting in federal school meal programs)
Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (Public Law 111-296), §143
USDA Report to Congress, *Review of Local Policies on Meal Charges and Provision of Alternate Meals*, June 2016, www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/unpaidmealcharges-report.pdf
Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies, USDA FNS Memo SP 46-2016 (07/08/16), www.fns.usda.gov/unpaid-meal-charges-local-meal-charge-policies
Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q&A, USDA FNS Memo SP 57-2016 (09/16/16), <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/SP57-2016os.pdf>
Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q&A, USDA FNS Memo SP 23-2017 (03/23/17), <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/SP23-2017os.pdf>
Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments, USDA FNS Memo SP 47-2016 (07/08/16), www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/SP47-2016os.pdf
Overcoming the Unpaid Meal Challenge - Proven Strategies from Our Nation's Schools, USDA FNS Guidance Document (May 2017), <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/SP29-2017a1.pdf>
Student Meal Charge Policy, NYSED Guidance Memo, (5/30/17), <http://www.cn.nysed.gov/content/student-meal-charge-policy>

1st Reading of Revision: January 6, 2016, Adoption: January 20, 2016
Revised & Adopted: October 18, 2017, Revised & Adopted January 9, 2018