

General Brown Central School District

Meal Charge and Prohibition Against Meal Shaming Policy

Purpose.

The goal of the General Brown Central School District is to provide student access to nutritious no or low-cost meals each school day and to ensure that a pupil whose parent/guardian has unpaid school meal fees is not shamed or treated differently than a pupil whose parent/guardian does not have unpaid meal fees.

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 stigmatized, distressed or embarrassed.

This policy establishes procedures to address unpaid meal charges throughout the General Brown Central School District in a way that does not stigmatize distress or embarrass students. The provisions of this policy pertain to regular priced reimbursable school breakfast, lunch. The General Brown Central School District provides this policy as a courtesy to those students in the event that they forget or lose their money. Charging of items outside of the reimbursable meals (a la carte items, adult meals, etc.) is prohibited.

Policy.

Free Meal Benefit - Free eligible students will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch meal of their choice each day. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.

Reduced Meal Benefit - Reduced eligible students will be allowed to receive a breakfast of their choice for 25¢ and lunch of their choice for 25¢ each day. The charge meals offered to students will be reimbursable meals available to all students, unless the student's parent or guardian has specifically provided written permission to the school to withhold a meal (Appendix B: Parent Flag Instructions). A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.

Full Pay Students - Students will pay for meals at the school's published paid meal rate each day. The charge meals offered to students will be the reimbursable meals available to all students, unless the student's parent or guardian has specifically provided written permission to the school to withhold a meal (Appendix B: Parent Flag Instructions). A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.

Ongoing Staff Training - Staff will be trained annually and on an as needed basis on the procedures for managing meal charges using the NYSED Webinar or the school's training program.

Parent Notification - The Food Service Director will review all student accounts twice monthly. The Food Service Department will contact the parent or guardian once an account is \$10 or more in arrears (Appendix A: Food Service Account Charging Policy).

Parent Outreach - The Food Service Director will make 2 documented attempts to reach out to parents/guardians to complete a Free and Reduced application ([F&R Application](#)). The first attempt will be part of the Food Service Day 1 package. The second attempt will be to reach out to those previously enrolled in the Free and Reduced program within the first 45 academic days of the school year.

The Food Service Day 1 package will also include a flag instruction form so that parents can convey any special instructions concerning student's accounts (Appendix B).

School staff will contact the parent/guardian to offer assistance with completion of meal application to determine if there are other issues within the household causing the child to have insufficient funds, offering any other assistance that is appropriate.

The parent/guardian should contact the Food Service Department if they need assistance with completing the Free and Reduced application ([F&R Application](#)).

Minimizing Student Distress - The General Brown Central School District will not publicly identify or stigmatize any student on the line or discuss any outstanding meal debt in the presence of any other students.

The General Brown Central School District will not take any action directed at a student to collect unpaid school meal fees.

Students who incur meal charges will not be required to wear a wristband or handstamp, to do chores or work to pay for meals.

Schools will not throw away a meal after it has been served because of the student's inability to pay for the meal or because of previous meal charges.

The General Brown Central School District will deal directly with parents/guardians regarding unpaid school meal fees (Appendix A). Students will not be confronted about any unpaid school meal fees.

Ongoing Eligibility Certification - The Food Service Director or designated individual will conduct direct certification with NYSSIS or using NYSED Roster Upload every 2 months to maximize free eligibility.

The Food Service Director or designated individual will provide parents/guardians with free and reduced price application and instructions at the beginning of each school year in school enrollment packet. If enrollment is after the beginning of the school year, the initial day 1 packet will be given out during the enrollment process.

The General Brown Central School District will accept electronic meal applications, and will provide an explanation of the process in the school enrollment packet along with instructions on how to request a paper application at no cost. Electronic meal applications and instructions are provided on our website at www.gblions.org using the Food Service quick link in the right column on the page ([Food Service Department](#)).

The General Brown Central School District will provide additional free and reduced price applications throughout the school year to families identified as owing meal charges.

The General Brown Central School District will use administrative prerogative judiciously, only after using all efforts to obtain a completed application from the parent/guardian only with available information on family size and income that falls within approvable guidelines.

The General Brown Central School District will coordinate with the foster, homeless, migrant, runaway coordinators at least monthly to certify eligible students.

Students/Parents/Guardians may pay for meals in advance via [MySchoolBucks](#) or with a check payable to General Brown Cafeteria. Further details are available on our webpage at [General Brown](#). Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a child may be without meal money on any given day. Any remaining funds for a particular student may/will be carried over to the next school year.

A written or emailed request for a refund for any money remaining in their account must be submitted to the Food Service Director for withdrawn or graduating students. Students who are graduating at the end of the year will be given the option to transfer to a sibling's account with a written request.

Unclaimed Funds must be requested within one school year. Afterwards, all unclaimed funds become the property of the General Brown Central School District Food Service Program.

Appendix A

NON-INSTRUCTIONAL BUSINESS 5662
FOOD SERVICE ACCOUNT CHARGING POLICY

Student Accounts

Charging a meal is a courtesy that the General Brown Central School District extends to its students in the event that a child does not have available funds to purchase a school breakfast or lunch. Parent(s)/guardian(s) should ensure accounts are up to date and balanced.

- a) Snacks may be charged only if there is enough money in the student's pre-paid account to cover the full amount of the charge.
- b) The Food Service Director will review all student accounts twice monthly. The Food Service Department will contact the parent or guardian once an account is \$10 or more in arrears.
- c) 15 days after 1st contact, if the account is still in arrears, the Food Service Department will mail a letter for restitution that includes a Free and Reduced application ([F&R Application](#)). Applications received and approved will not clear up the current debt, but will alleviate any future balances and debts from incurring from the date of approval.
- d) If after 45 days the account remains in arrears, The District Business Office will send a third letter via certified mail seeking restitution.

Adult Accounts

In accordance with the New York State Child Nutrition Program Administration memorandum dated May 2006, all adults, including staff and faculty of the General Brown School District, should pay for their meals at the time of service or set up pre-paid accounts. Adults, including staff and faculty, will be allowed to charge meals against pre-paid account balances only. No other charges will be allowed.

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General Brown Central School District
Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, Public Law Section 108-265 Section 204
Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act 1946, 42 United States Code (USC) Section 1751 et seq.
Child Nutrition Act of 1966, 42 United States Code (USC) Section 1771 et seq.
7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 210.10
Adopted: 5/10/10

PARENT FLAG INSTRUCTIONS

If you would like to place a flag on your student's account please fill out this form and return it to the food service department. **Please fill out 1 form per student.**

Flags from previous years have been removed.

Students name: _____

School: _____

Please check the box(s) that describes your flag instructions best.

- Do not allow my student to charge extra items using lunch account.
- Student must use cash to purchase extras and doubles.
- Do not allow my student to purchase extras or doubles.
- Do not allow my student to charge anything, this includes Breakfast and Lunch.
- Do not allow my student to purchase Breakfast for any reason.
- Do not allow my student to purchase Lunch for any reason.
- Allergy (please specify/ Doctor's not needed to alter meal pattern)
- Other (reason not specified) _____

***We will do our best to serve your wishes and assist in controlling your student's account.

Printed Name

Signature