

MEAL SHAMING PROCEDURES

The goal of the Germantown Central School District is to provide student access to nutritious meals each school day. 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.

Charges:

- On occasion, students may not have enough funds for a meal. To ensure that students do not go hungry, the board will allow those students to charge the cost of a meal to be paid back at a later date.
- The board will allow only one regular reimbursable meal, which does not include, a la carte items, side dishes, additional meals or snacks.
- The parent or guardian may provide written permission to the school to withhold a meal.

Minimizing Student Distress:

- Staff will not publicly identify or stigmatize any student on the line or discuss any outstanding meal debt in the presence of any other students.
- Students who incur meal charges will not be required to wear a wristband or handstamp, or to do chores or work to pay for meals.
- Staff 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.
- School will not take any action directed at a pupil to collect unpaid school meal fees.
- School will deal directly with parents/guardians regarding unpaid school meal fees.

Parent Notification:

- Parents/guardians will be notified via email and letter mailed home that a student's account balance has fallen to \$5.00.
- If the balance should fall below zero, then parents or guardians will receive an additional letter and email from the cafeteria.
- If the student has \$50 in charges a letter will be mailed home an email will be sent from the Business Administrator asking for payment and if you're struggling financially the social worker is here to assist with free and reduced forms. If the account isn't paid in full within one month, then another letter will go out offering a repayment plan.
- Letters and emails will continue monthly until the account is paid in full.
- All parents will get a letter home at the end of the year showing their students balance on it.

Free and reduced lunch applications:

- School staff will conduct direct certification with NYSSIS or use NYSED Roster Upload at least monthly to maximize free eligibility.
- School staff will provide parents/guardians with free and reduced price application and instructions at the beginning of each school year and in the school enrollment packet.
- On the 15th day of school, the cafeteria will provide the Social Worker with a list of students that were on the free and reduced lunch last year, but have not signed up yet this year. The Social Worker will get in contact with these student's parents or guardians and let them know that we can provide assistance with signing up for the free and reduced lunch program.

- On the 25th day of school again the cafeteria will provide the Social Worker with a list of students that were on the free and reduced lunch last year, but have not signed up yet this year. The Social Worker will get in contact with these student's parents or guardians and let them know that we can provide assistance with signing up for the free and reduced lunch program.
- Free and reduced forms will be available on the website.
- Staff will coordinate with the foster, homeless, migrant, runaway coordinators at least monthly to certify eligible students.

Payments:

- Students/Parents/Guardians may pay for meals in advance via MySchoolBucks or with a check payable to Germantown Central School District or Cash.
- At the end of the year any remaining funds for a particular student may be carried over to the next school year.
- Parents/Guardians must submit a written or e-mailed request for a refund of any money remaining in an account of a withdrawn or graduated student. 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, after which the unclaimed funds become the property of the Germantown Central School District Food Service Program.

Staff Training:

- Staff will be trained annually and throughout the year as needed on the procedures for managing meal charges using the NYSED Webinar or the school's training program. This includes ongoing training for eligibility certification for free or reduced meals.

Reference Policy: “Meals and the Prohibition against Shaming” Policy 5660A