

EASTCONN FOOD SERVICE DEPARTMENT CHARGE POLICY

It is the policy of EASTCONN to ensure that students receive healthy and nutritious meals through the District's Food Services Program. In order to sustain the Food Services Program, the Program cannot permit the excessive charging of student meals. Therefore, any charging of meals must be consistent with this policy and its accompanying regulations. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall develop regulations designed to effectively and respectfully address family responsibility for unpaid meals. EASTCONN encourages any parent or guardian who anticipates a problem with paying for meals to contact the Food Service Manager and/or the applicable school principal as soon as possible for assistance.

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

EASTCONN participates in the National School Lunch Program, sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture, which permits the school system to offer free and reduced price meals to students who qualify. EASTCONN encourages all families who may have a child who is eligible for free or reduced price lunch to apply. Families may apply at any time during the summer or school year and may file a new application if there is a change in household income or the number of members of a family's household. Applicants are responsible to pay for meals until the application for free and reduced price lunch is completed and approved. All applications for free and reduced price lunch and any related information will be considered strictly confidential and will not be shared outside the Program. Policy Applicable to Non-Payment of Lunch Fees: No student will ever be denied a lunch. No alternative meal consisting of unflavored milk, a piece of fruit and sunbutter sandwich will be given as a "consequence" of parent not paying for lunch.

FOOD SERVICE CHARGE ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

In order to sustain the Food Service Program in the EASTCONN Schools, EFS (EASTCONN Food Services) requires that each family pay in advance for each student's school meals. To facilitate payment in advance for school meals, the Board has established a payment program whereby parents or guardians may pay for meals in advance either by cash or check. For more information about payment methods or if you have a question, please contact the Food Service Manager at (860) 932-4190. If at any time, a parent or guardian anticipates a problem with paying for meals, he/she shall be encouraged to contact the Food Service Manager as soon as possible for assistance. Parents and guardians are encouraged to apply for free and reduced price meals for their children. In order to qualify, families must meet eligibility criteria. Applications can be filed at any time during the summer or school year and new applications may be filed if there is a change in household income or in the number of household members. Applicants are responsible to pay for meals until the application for free and reduced price lunch is completed and approved. All applications for free and reduced price lunch and any related information will be considered strictly confidential and will not be shared outside the Program. No child may be denied a school meal due to lack of pre-payment, however, the following steps shall be taken whenever a child does not have sufficient funds in his or her school meal account

Step I

If a student's meal account falls below \$10, the Food Service Manager shall send home a reminder letter with the student reminding the parent to deposit funds into the student's meal account.

Step II

If the parent or guardian does not deposit sufficient funds into the school meal account and the school meal account balance becomes negative, the Food Service Manager shall send home a second reminder letter with the student reminding the parent or guardian to deposit funds into the student's meal account. This letter will include information for the parent or guardian about the National School Lunch Program's eligibility criteria for free and reduced price lunch along with an application for the free and reduced price lunch program. The Food Service Manager shall also make a phone call to the parent or guardian reminding the parent or guardian of the lack of funds and the consequences for non-payment.

Step III

If the parent does not deposit sufficient funds into the school meal account and the student charges three (3) additional meals, the Food Services Manager shall send a Certified Letter to the parent or guardian reminding the parent or guardian of the need to deposit funds into the student's meal account immediately. This letter will include additional information for the parent or guardian about the National School Lunch Program's eligibility criteria for free and reduced price lunch along with an additional application for the free and reduced price lunch program. The Middle School Counselor shall place a second phone call to the parent or guardian reminding the parent or guardian of the lack of funds and the consequences for non-payment.

Step IV

If the parent or guardian does not deposit funds into the school meal account after the Certified Letter has been sent, the school shall place a third call to the parent or guardian to remind the parent or guardian to deposit funds and to pay any accumulated arrears and to inform the parent that the student's progress reports and report cards may be withheld until payment of the arrears has been received and processed by the Food Services Program. If necessary, the Principal shall also schedule a meeting with the parent or guardian of the student to discuss the arrearage.

"NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT"

In accordance with Federal Law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, the Thompson Public Schools Food Service Department is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. If you feel you have been treated unfairly, you may file a complaint of discrimination by writing USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington D.C. 20250-9410 or call toll free (866) 632-9992 (Voice). Individuals who are hearing impaired or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.