

Meal Charge Procedure for Lyndon Institute

- I. **Purpose** - The purpose of this procedure is to establish consistent procedures for Lyndon Institute to provide meals to students who have insufficient funds in their school meal accounts and the collection of unpaid meal debt.

General Statement of Procedure –

- A. Lyndon Institute recognizes proper nutrition is essential for adequate learning to occur and to establish lifelong, healthy eating habits while also working to maintain the financial integrity of the school food service program.
- B. It is the procedure of Lyndon Institute to offer high quality, healthy breakfasts and lunches that meet the federal guidelines to all students at a reasonable cost to ensure no child goes hungry.
- C. Payments to student accounts are made in one of three ways, payment can be accepted via cash, check or credit card at the business office, you can leave cash or a check at the register in the dining hall, or you can login to My Backpack and put money directly on the student's debit account.
- D. Families may apply for free and reduced-price meals at any time during the school year. Meal applications are distributed to households after July 1st and prior to the first day of school, by mail. Parents are encouraged to complete and return the applications as soon as possible. In addition, applications are available at the school office during regular business hours and online at www.lyndoninstitute.org. If household size changes or income changes, families may re-apply for meal benefits any time during the school year.
 - 1) Households who apply for free and reduced-price meal benefits are responsible for payment of all school meals and accumulated charges until approval is granted. Federal guidelines allow a maximum of 10 days to approve a new application. No child is allowed a free or reduced price meal without an approved application or direct certification information on file. Parents will receive a notification letter of the student's eligibility showing the effective date. If a notification letter is not received within 10 days, the parent should check with the approving official at the school to see if the application has been received.
 - 2) Households who are receiving 3SquaresVT or Reach-Up benefits will receive a notification of eligibility letter based on Direct Certification from the school if the school has received information about your child(ren). If your household receives these benefits and you have not received this letter from the school, the school has not received information regarding eligibility of your child(ren), the household must contact the school immediately to provide current information.
 - 3) Free and reduced-price eligible students may receive a breakfast and a lunch each day at no charge.
 - 4) A la carte items, such as a separate carton of milk or a second entrée, are not allowed to be charged to the student's debit account.

Meal Charge Procedure –

- A. If the student account has insufficient funds to pay for breakfast and/or lunch meals, they will be provided a meal regardless of their meal account status. All negative balances must be paid prior to the end of the school year. Any remaining balances will be carried over to the next school year.
- B. Free and reduced-price eligible students will always be provided a meal regardless of unpaid student accounts.
- C. A student eligible for paid meals who has 'cash in hand' at the time of meal service will be provided a meal regardless of unpaid student accounts. The 'cash in hand' will not be applied to past due accounts.
- D. Students with an overdrawn account are not allowed to charge a la carte items.

Account Status Notifications –

- A. Households are strongly encouraged to keep sufficient funds in the student accounts to cover weekly meal purchases. Lyndon Institute will notify each household of account balances by:
 - The Food Service Program will send a monthly statement to the families.
 - Families can check their account balances online through My Backpack.
 - Families may contact the Business Office at 802-535-3729 or businessoffice@lyndoninstitute.org.
 - Students will be given a verbal reminder or written notice in the food service line.
- B. The family will be notified when the student account balance has reached \$0.00 by:
 - The Food Service Program will send a monthly statement to the families.
 - Students will be given a verbal reminder or written notice in the food service line.
 - Weekly emails will be sent to parents whose children have a negative account balance.
 - A second request for payment will be sent after 5 days if the household has not responded to the first request.

Collection of Unpaid Meal Debt –

When the student balance is (\$25.00), the following collection activities will be followed:

- a. High School:
 - The Business Office will contact the household request payment.
 - A certified letter will be sent to the household notifying them that the debt will be turned over to a collection agency if not paid by (6/30).
 - All funds owed to the food service program will be paid in full on the last day of school.
 - Checks returned with non-sufficient funds will follow the school's policy.