

**Middleborough Public Schools
School Lunch Program
30 Forest Street
Middleborough, MA 02346**

SCHOOL LUNCH- NEGATIVE BALANCE POLICY

PURPOSE/POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear and consistent guidelines for negative lunch balances. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the food service department, which strives to operate a financially responsible, self-funded food service program.

GUIDELINES

1.) Student Eligibility

- a) **Free Lunch Students.** Free lunch status allows a child to receive a free meal every day. A la carte items (including snacks and extra milk) are not part of the free lunch program.
- b) **Reduced Lunch Students** will be allowed to have a negative lunch up to a maximum dollar equivalent of six (6) reduced priced meals which will be known as the “account cap”. Reduced lunch status allows a child to receive reduced priced meals at a reduced amount determined by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Nutrition, Health & Safety Programs.
- c) **All other Students**
 - a) Elementary & Middle School Students: will be allowed to charge up to a maximum dollar equivalent of three (3) meals which will be known as the “account cap”.
 - b) High School Students: Will be allowed to charge up to a maximum dollar equivalent of one (1) meal which will be known as the “account cap”.

2.) Students who have reached their Account Cap.

All children who have reached their account cap (as noted in Student Eligibility) will be offered the alternate meal. This meal will consist of a fruit, vegetable, grain, protein, and milk. An example would be a turkey sandwich, carrot sticks, an apple and milk. This meal will be charged to their lunch account at the standard lunch rate.

3.) Money Owed

- a. Once the account cap is reached, the food service department will reach out by phone and by letter home.
- b. If the Account balance hits \$20.00 or more, the food service department will reach out to the building administration to help secure the funds. This could include:
 - 1. Non Participation in Senior Activities
 - 2. Non Participation in 8th Grade Activities

4.) Financial Hardship

If a family is facing financial hardship, a free and reduced form can be filled out at any time. They may also set up a payment plan with the food service department.

