

## COLLECTION OF MONEY/FOOD TICKETS

### Student Meal Charges Lunch Policy

The purpose of this policy is to insure compliance with federal reporting requirements for the Child Nutrition Program and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances. Federal reporting requirements do not allow the Child Nutrition Program to charge meals. Students may pay for meals in advance, at the time of purchases or make electronic payments.

Westport Public Schools Food Service Department is a self-funded program. Staffing levels do not allow for the extensive time involved in billing for charged lunches. USDA Federal Management Circular 796.1 (RV.2) list bad debts as non-allowable expenditures of federal funds, therefore losses on meals charged and /or NSF checks cannot be paid out of Child Nutrition funds. To assure compliance with Federal Management Circular 796-1 (RV.2) annually a transaction should be made for uncollectable charges or insufficient fund checks by general funds to record reimbursement for all said bad debt. USDA federal regulations state that all meal payments are to be made at the point of service. The State Agency's position is that Child Nutrition Program funds cannot be used for program purposes to resolve bad debt as noted by USDA, FNS Instruction 796-1 Rev. 2.

All school cafeterias possess computerized point of sale/cash register systems that maintain a record of all monies deposited and spent for each student and said record will be made available to the parent upon request. Each school shall inform parents that meals can be paid for in advance and that balances may be maintained in their child's account to minimize the possibility that the child may be without meal money on any given day. If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the Food Service Director will investigate the situation more closely, including contacting the parent/guardian to bring money to the school and/or encouraging the parent to apply for free or reduced price meals, or to make payments through the online payment system, [MySchoolBucks.com](http://MySchoolBucks.com)

Students may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Applications are available in the main office at all schools, the Food Service Department Office, 17 Main Road, Westport and on the Food Service Department website at [www.westportschools.org](http://www.westportschools.org). We strongly encourage all families that may qualify to apply for free or reduced price meals at any time to help during financially difficult times.

Parents/Guardians may be notified in writing when 3 charges have accumulated. It is expected that all incurred charges will be paid within 5 days of written notice; by sending cash, check or money order payable to the Town of Westport. Payment must be sent with the child to the cafeteria, by mailing a check or money order to the appropriate school, and through the online payment systems [MySchoolBucks.com](http://MySchoolBucks.com) Students will be served a differentiated meal if the accumulated balance is not paid in full. The differentiated meal shall consist of a sandwich (not peanut butter and jelly), fruit, vegetable and eight ounce low fat milk. If the charge balance has not been paid within

the expected time of the written notification and a pattern of not providing a bag lunch or money for lunch for a child is noted, the Massachusetts Department of Children and Family Services may be informed of the situation.

In addition, If a student has a negative balance, they will not be allowed to purchase a double lunch or an additional slice of pizza on “special pizza” days.

This policy’s provisions pertain to regular school breakfast and lunch meals only. Federal policy prohibits the withholding of meals from a child as a form of discipline. The Superintendent shall develop regulations and procedures to support this policy.