

**THOMPSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FOOD SERVICE DEPARTMENT**

CHARGE POLICY

It is the policy of the Thompson Board of Education (the “Board” or “District”) to ensure that students receive healthy and nutritious meals through the District’s Food Services Program (the “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.

The Board 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.

The National School Lunch Program

The District 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. The Thompson Board of Education 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 (the “Program”) in the Thompson Public Schools (the “District”), the Board 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 or through www.myschoolbucks.com through the My School Bucks program. For more information about payment methods or if you have a question, please contact the Food Service Manager at (860) 923-9581, x588.

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 and/or the applicable school principal 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.

Mary R. Fisher Elementary School

Step I

If a student's meal account falls below \$10, the Food Service Manager shall send home a reminder letter in the student's "Friday Folder" 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 in his/her "Friday Folder" reminding the parents 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 parents 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 by the following Wednesday, 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 Elementary 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 Principal 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. The Principal shall also schedule a meeting with the parent or guardian to discuss the arrearage.

Thompson Middle School and Tourtellotte Memorial High School

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 Principal 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.

For Tourtellotte Memorial High School students, the student may be denied a cap and gown if payment of arrears is not received and processed by the Food Services Program prior to the last day of school.

Nondiscrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;*
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or*
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov*

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

