

BYRAM HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
10 Tripp Lane
Armonk, New York 10405

Meal Shaming Prevention Plan

Goal, Purpose and Outcome of the Meal Shaming Prevention Plan

The goal of the Byram Hills CSD Food Service Program is to provide student access to nutritious no, or low, cost meals each school day and to ensure that a pupil whose Parent/Guardian has unpaid school meal fees is not shamed or treated differently than a pupil whose Parent/Guardian does not have unpaid meal fees.

Unpaid charges place a financial burden on our school district. The purpose of this Plan is to insure compliance with Federal requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances to ensure that the student is not stigmatized, distressed or embarrassed.

The intent of this Plan is to establish procedures to address unpaid meal charges throughout the Byram Hills CSD Food Service Program in a way that does not stigmatize, distress or embarrass students. The provisions of this Plan pertain to regular priced reimbursable school breakfast and lunch meals only. The Byram Hills CSD Food Service Program provides this Plan as a courtesy to those students in the event that they have a negative balance in their school lunch account or forget, lose, or don't have their lunch money. Charging of an item other than the reimbursable meal, such as; an a la carte item, second meal, adult meal or snack is expressly prohibited.

Elements of this Plan will be incorporated in the Board of Education Policy 8505 – Charging School Meals.

Students eligible for the free meal benefit will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch meal of their choice each day. A la carte, snack or similar items are not included in this benefit and must be paid. Students eligible for the reduced price meal benefit will be allowed to receive a breakfast and lunch of their choice, free, each day. A la carte, snack or similar items are not included in the reduced price meal benefit and must be paid. Students not eligible for either of these two benefits will pay for meals at the District's published paid meal rate each day. In the event that a student is unable to pay for a meal on a particular day, the student may charge a reimbursable meal.

Procedures to Prevent Meal Shaming and Safeguard Dignity and Confidentiality

- a. The District will provide all students with the reimbursable meal of their choice regardless of whether or not the student has money in his/her school lunch account, unless the student's parent/guardian has provided specific written documentation to withhold meals. Charging of items outside the reimbursable meal (ala carte items, second meals, adult meals or snacks) is expressly prohibited.

- b. Parents/Guardians that do NOT want their child to charge a meal must submit a letter to Bryan Bischof, Food Service Director, at the Byram Hills High School, 10 Tripp Lane Armonk, New York 10504 or send an email to Bryan Bischof at bbischof@byramhills.net indicating that they do not want their child to charge a meal.
- c. To safeguard the dignity and confidentiality of students in the serving line, reasonable efforts must be used whenever possible to avoid calling attention to a student's unpaid meal charge.
- d. Foodservice staff and cashiers will be trained on an annual basis at the beginning of the school year and throughout the school year as needed to ensure that the District's procedures outlined in this Plan are carried out correctly. Training will include utilizing the New York State Education Webinar on meal shaming. Staff training will also include ongoing eligibility certification for free and reduced price meals.
- e. Parents/Guardians will be notified before the school year begins with information about the free and reduced meal program and how they can fill out an application.
- f. The District will notify Parents/Guardians of low and negative school lunch account balances and/or charged meals as follows:
 - 1. Low balance (\$10 threshold) and negative balance email reminders will be emailed to parents twice per week. The email will have information about how to replenish the school lunch account as well as information on how to apply for free and reduced priced meals. The district will not charge interest or fees for charged meals.
 - 2. If the student has reached the charge limit of (\$15.00) and has charged an additional 5 lunch meals, the Food Service Director will notify the school building Principal, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Secretary to the Assistant Superintendent for Business via email and call the Parent/Guardian to discuss the outstanding lunch debt.
 - 3. If no response is received the Principal (or Assistant Principal) will call the Parent/Guardian.
- g. The District will support eligible families to enroll in the free and reduced priced meal program by providing paper applications at all school locations as well as a direct link to where the application can be found on the school district website. After 5 meals have been charged, the District shall:
 - 1. Make every attempt to determine if a student is directly certified for free meals. The secretary to the Assistant Superintendent for Business will be copied on emails to parents/guardian whose child has charged 5 meals.
 - 2. Make at least 2 documented attempts, not including the application or instructions included in a school enrollment packet, to reach the student's parent/guardian and have them fill out an application for free and reduced priced meals.
 - 3. Offer the parent/guardian assistance with completing a free and reduced priced meal application,
 - 4. Determine if there are other issues within the household that have caused the child to have insufficient funds to purchase school meal.

5. Offer any other assistance that is supportive
- h. The District will decrease student distress and/or embarrassment by:
 1. Not publicly identifying or stigmatizing a student who cannot pay for a meal or who owes a meal debt including but not limited to requiring a student to wear a wristband or hand stamp.
 2. Not allowing students who cannot pay for a meal or who owes a meal debt to do chores or other work to pay for meals
 3. Not requiring a student to throw away a meal after it has been served because of the student's inability to pay for the meal or because money is owed from earlier meals.
 4. Not taking action directed at a student to collect unpaid school meal fees. The district will attempt to collect unpaid meal charges directly from the Parent/Guardian, but will not use a debt collector to do so.
 5. Not discussing any outstanding meal debt in the presence of other students.
 - i. The District will follow the following procedure to handle unpaid meal charges:
 1. If the student has reached the charge limit of (\$15.00) and has charged an additional 5 lunch meals, the District will notify the Parent/Guardian via email and copy the school building Principal, Assistant Principal, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Secretary to the Assistant Superintendent for Business.
 - j. The District will provide a free, printed meal application in every school enrollment packet at the beginning of each school year.
 - k. School staff will conduct direct certification with NYSSIS or by using NYSED Roster uploads at least monthly to maximize free meal eligibility.
 1. If the District becomes aware that a student who has not submitted a meal application and is eligible for free or reduced priced meals, the District will complete and file an application for the student pursuant to title seven, section 245.6(d) of the code of federal regulations.
 - m. School district liaisons required for homeless, foster and migrant students will coordinate with the foodservice department, at least monthly, to make sure such students receive free school meals, in accordance with federal law.

Students, Parents and/or Guardians may pay for meals in advance via an online service (mypaymentsplus.com) that lets Parents/Guardians view a child's school food purchases and provides the option of making online payments to a child's school lunch account. Money can also be added to a child's account via check made out to the Byram Hills CSD School Lunch Fund. Funds should be maintained in a child's school lunch account to minimize the possibility that a child may be without meal money on any given day. Any remaining funds at year end in June will be carried over to the next school year.

Parents/Guardians may request a refund for students that are no longer attending a school in the District and for graduating students by sending a letter to Bryan Bischof at the Byram Hills High School, 10 Tripp Lane Armonk, New York 10504 or by sending an email to Bryan Bischof at bbischof@byramhills.net. Parents/Guardians of graduating students have the option of transferring any outstanding balance to a sibling's school lunch account by submitting a written

request to Melinda Hamilton at the above address (or email address). Negative balances on a student's school lunch account will be carried forward to the following school year.

Unclaimed funds (funds in a student lunch account after a student moves out of the District or graduates) must be requested within one school year. After one school year, unclaimed funds will become the property of the Byram Hills CSD Food Service Program.