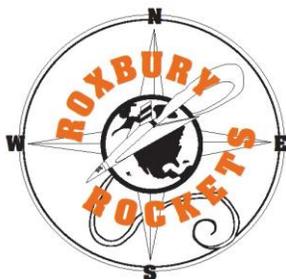


ADMINISTRATION

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*Superintendent*

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*Principal*

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*Treasurer*



# Roxbury Central School

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## Roxbury Central School District Prohibition Against Meal Shaming Plan 2018-2019

The goal of the Roxbury Central School District is to provide student access to nutritious free or low-cost meals each school day and to ensure that a student whose parent or guardian has unpaid school meal fees is not shamed or treated differently than a student whose parent or guardian does not have unpaid meal fees.

Unpaid charges place a large financial burden on our District. The purpose of this plan is to ensure compliance with federal requirements of 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 in the Roxbury Central School District in a way that does not stigmatize, distress or embarrass students. The provisions of this plan pertain to regular reimbursable school breakfast and lunch meals only.

The following plan components are designed to ensure compliance with the Law:

### A. Student Meal Choices

1. The District shall provide all students with their choice of a reimbursable meal, if the student requests one. Charging of items outside of the reimbursable meals (i.e., a la carte items, adult meals, etc.) is expressly prohibited. (See RCS Policy #5660)
2. Parents may notify the District in writing, which will be placed on the point of sale (POS) system, alerting the cashier of a request for "no charging".

### B. Staff Training

1. All food service staff shall receive training at the start of each school year regarding the District's Prohibition Against Meal Shaming Plan, related procedures, and communication with parents regarding eligibility for free or reduced-price meals for their children.
2. School food service staff shall receive training to:
  - a. Access accounts by student identification numbers rather than names;
  - b. Ensure that the student account screen can only be viewed by the cashier;
  - c. Make reference to accounts as generic accounts so that the status of the account is not revealed;
  - d. Maintain confidentiality of student meal account information between the cashier and the student;

*"Our vision is to provide a safe and caring environment in which our students can develop academically, creatively and socially. Each member of our school community will demonstrate personal integrity, a commitment to learning and an appreciation for cultural diversity."*

3. The School Lunch Manager shall access appropriate written documents, videos, and other training materials if offered by the Child Nutrition Unit of the New York State Education Department or state professional organizations.

C. Communications Procedures to Parents

1. Parents and guardians with unpaid meal accounts shall be provided with information, assistance and accessibility to free and reduced meal applications by the District. All parents and guardians shall be informed of eligibility of free and reduced meals at the start of the school year in accordance with the procedures set forth by the New York State Education Department. Application information will be posted on the District's website at [www.roxburycs.org](http://www.roxburycs.org), included in new registration packets, and be available through the Superintendent's office.
2. Parents and guardians may check their student's cafeteria balance by accessing the District's on-line account system, My Meal Plan, on the District's website [www.roxburycs.org](http://www.roxburycs.org).
3. Parents and guardians, whether or not they are accessing the District's online system will receive a letter from the Superintendent or his designee or phone calls regarding unpaid balances in excess of \$3.00.
4. Remaining funds at the end of the year in a student's meal account will automatically be carried over to the next year unless a written request for refund is received by the District from the family.
5. Refunds for withdrawn and graduating students will be transferred to a younger sibling's account or reimbursed to the parent or guardian upon request.

D. Communication Procedures to Support Free and Reduced Meal Eligible Families

1. In the event a parent or guardian owes for 5 or meals charged by the student, the District shall:
  - a. Make every attempt to determine if a student is directly certified to be eligible for free meals;
  - b. Make at least two attempts, not including the application or instructions included in a school enrollment packet, to reach the student's parent or guardian and have the parent or guardian fill out a meal application;
  - c. Require the Child Nutrition Program Official to contact the parent or guardian to offer assistance with a meal application. The Child Nutrition Program Official may make a referral to the principal, social worker or school counselor so that they may determine if there are other issues within the household that have caused the child to have insufficient funds to purchase a school meal; and
  - d. Offer any other assistance that is appropriate.
  - e. In extenuating circumstances, the District may complete an application on behalf of a child given sufficient cause and backup documentation supporting the child's eligibility.
2. The Child Nutrition Program Official shall determine eligible families through the Direct Certification Process at least three times during the school year. The Child Nutrition Program Official shall search the site at other times during the year for newly eligible students.
3. All new students, previously eligible students, or students identified as needy by authorized school staff will be manually searched on the New York State Education Department website by the Child Nutrition Program Official to determine eligibility. If the student is determined to be eligible, the parent or guardian will be notified by the District.
4. Before the annual thirty-day grace period for free and reduced meals is exhausted, the District will contact the parent or guardian in writing or by phone if a new application for free and reduced meals has not been submitted. The District will offer assistance with completion of the application and as necessary, coordinate with other authorized staff to provide the assistance.

E. Procedures Designed to Decrease Student Distress or Embarrassment

1. District staff members are prohibited from doing any of the following:
  - a. Publicly identify or stigmatize a student who cannot pay for a meal or who owes a meal debt by any means, including but not limited to announcing or publicizing the names of children with unpaid meal charges, or requiring a student wear a wristband or hand stamp.
  - b. Require a student who cannot pay for a meal or who owes a meal debt to do chores or other work to pay for meals.
  - c. Require that a student 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 for earlier meals.
  - d. Take any action directed at a student to collect unpaid school meal fees. The District may only attempt to collect unpaid school meal fees from a parent or guardian, but shall not use a debt collector, as defined in section eight hundred three of the federal Consumer Credit Protection Act, 5 U.S.C. Sec. 16921

F. Procedures to Handle Unpaid Meal Charges

1. Approximately once a month the Cafeteria Manager will review account balances in the POS System to identify unpaid balances. Upon review, unpaid accounts totaling greater than \$3.00 will require the District to send notice by mail to the parent or guardian.
2. If two or three notices are not acknowledged by the parent or guardian the District will make a phone call to the contact information within the eSchool student data system.
3. Nothing in this section is intended to allow for the unlimited accrual of debt on school food service accounts.
4. The District is prohibited from charging interest or fees on unpaid balances at any time.

G. Procedures to Enroll in the Free and Reduced Price Meals Program

1. The District shall follow the procedures to enroll in the Free and Reduced Price Meals Program set forth by the New York State Education Department Child Nutrition Unit.
2. Such procedures shall include, at the beginning of the school year, the District providing a free, printed meal application in every school enrollment packet and accessibility through the District website at [www.roxburycs.org](http://www.roxburycs.org).
3. Completed applications from the parents or guardians should be returned to the Child Nutrition Program Official's office. Parents or guardians who are on the Statewide Direct Certification System (DCMP) are automatically downloaded and do not need to submit a paper application. Parents or guardians submitting a certification letter from the Department of Social Services stating eligibility also do not need to submit a paper application.
4. The Child Nutrition Program Official will review the applications and determine eligibility according to New York State Education Department guidelines, including direct certification and Department of Social Services certification for qualified individuals.
5. The Child Nutrition Program Official will notify parents and guardians by letter if their children qualify or do not qualify for free and reduced meals.

- H. Procedures for Students Not Submitting Free and Reduced Meal Application
1. Each student enrolled in the free and reduced meal program in the previous year is automatically granted a thirty school day grace period at the start of the school year for the parent or guardian to submit a new application.
  2. One week prior to the expiration of the thirty school day grace period, the Child Nutrition Program Official's office will contact the parent or guardian reminding him or her that a completed application has not been received.
- I. Coordination with School Liaisons for Homeless, Foster and Migrant Students
1. On an annual basis at the organizational meeting, the Board of Education will appoint a school liaison for homeless, foster and migrant students in accordance with Policy #7131 Education of Homeless Children and Youth.
  2. The liaison will contact the Child Nutrition Program Official to provide written notice that a student is designated as homeless, foster or migrant and qualifies for free meals on an immediate basis.
  3. The Cafeteria Manager will update the POS system to designate the student for free meals and maintain a listing for audit purposes.
- J. Who to Contact Regarding the Plan
1. The Child Nutrition Program Official, Thomas J. O'Brien, may be contacted regarding implementation of the plan at (607)326-4151 extension 15 or by email at [obrient@roxburycsd.org](mailto:obrient@roxburycsd.org).