Worcester Central School Equitable service Food Plan (Shaming Ban Plan)

District Code: 472506040000

Purpose

This plan is written to ensure that a pupil whose parent or guardian has unpaid meal fees is not shamed or treated differently than a pupil whose parent or guardian does not have unpaid school meal fees. This plan prohibits any public act to humiliate, stigmatize distress or embarrass a student who cannot afford lunch/breakfast. Second, it will continue its current School Board approved ban on alternative lunch/breakfast and continue to require students to receive the same lunch/breakfast as others. The plan is advertised on the District website through a link to all Cafeteria related items. The provisions of this plan pertain to regular priced reimbursable school breakfast, lunch and parent approved snacks only. Worcester Central School Cafeteria provides for charging of meals, in the event that the child has forgotten or lost their money. Charging items outside of the reimbursable meals (a la carte items, adult meals, etc.) is expressly prohibited.

School Lunch/breakfast Provision Statement

Full Pay Students - Students will pay for meals at the school's published paid meal rate each day. The charge meals offered to students will be reimbursable meals available to all students, unless the student's parent or guardian has specifically provided written permission to the school to withhold a meal. A la carte items, extra food, snack items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.

Students/Parents/Guardians may pay for meals in advance via www.myschoolbucks.com or with a check payable to Worcester Central School Cafeteria. Further details are available on our webpage at http://www.worcestercs.org/cafeteria.html. Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a child may be without meal money on any given day. Any remaining funds for a particular student may/will be carried over to the next school year.

Refunds for withdrawn, and graduating students; a written or e-mailed request for a refund of any money remaining in their account must be submitted. Students who are graduating at the end of the year will be given the option to transfer to a sibling's account with a written request.

Unclaimed Funds must be requested within one school year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the Worcester Central School Cafeteria Food Service Program.

If a student is a child of a parent or guardian who has unpaid school lunch/breakfast fees, Worcester Central School shall provide that student with the student's meal of choice of any reimbursable lunch/breakfast for any day school lunch/breakfast that is being served, if the student requests one, unless the student's parent or guardian has specifically provided written permission to the school to withhold a meal.

Free Meal Benefit - Free eligible students will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch meal of their choice each day. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.

Reduced Meal Benefit - Reduced eligible students will be allowed to receive a breakfast of their choice for \$.25 and lunch of their choice for \$.25 each day. The charge meals offered to students will be reimbursable meals available to all students, unless the student's parent or guardian has specifically provided written permission to the school to withhold a meal. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.

Establishing Parent/Child Eligibility for Free or Reduced-priced Meals

Worcester Central School will assist parents or guardians in completing the necessary procedures to apply for Free or Reduced-priced Meals for their children. Parents/Guardians/Children who are directly certified do not need to apply:

- As defined in the Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) under 7 CFR 245.2, direct certification means determining a child is eligible for free meals or free milk, as applicable, based on documentation obtained directly from the appropriate State or local agency or individuals authorized to certify that the child is:
- A member of a household receiving assistance under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program; or
- A foster child, homeless child, migrant child, Head Start or Even Start child or runaway child.

- At the beginning of each school year, all parents and guardians are provided with a packet of forms and directions for applying for free and reduced price school meals/milk. This packet also includes information regarding using the payment program <u>MySchoolBucks®¹</u>, along with log in instructions. This program allows parents and guardians to pay for student meals online, create low balance alerts, and pay for school lunch/breakfast via credit card.
- Parents and guardians are offered an opportunity for assistance in completing the Application to apply for Free and Reduced Price School Meals/Milk².
- A fillable form version of the Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals/Milk is posted on the school website, under the Departments pull down.
- As the District Census taker travels from family to family in the summer, she offers Application Packets for Free and Reduced Price School Meals/Milk and additionally offers guidance in filling out the application.
- School Liaisons for homeless, foster, and migrant students shall coordinate with the Cafeteria Department to make sure that such students receive free school meals, in accordance with federal law.
- School staff will conduct direct certification with NYSSIS or using NYSED Roster Upload at least monthly to maximize free eligibility.
- Schools will coordinate with the foster, homeless, migrant, runaway coordinators at least monthly to certify eligible students.

Parent Guardian Notification of Unpaid Lunch Fees

No notifications of unpaid balances are to be communicated via students to their parents. Worcester Central School notifies parents or guardians who have more than five unpaid school lunch/breakfast fees in several different ways:

• A monthly letter³ is sent to each parent or guardian stating each child's balance due. The letter also offers the option of an interest free payment plan, to reduce outstanding unpaid school lunch/breakfast fees. The letter also includes District contact information for guidance in filling out an application applying for free and reduced price school meals/milk.

- The notification letter also includes information about a payment program called <u>MySchoolBucks®</u>. This program allows parents and guardians to pay for student meals online, creates low balance alerts, and pay for school lunch/breakfast via credit card.
- A weekly "Robo-Call⁴" is made to each parent or guardian with negative balances, stating each child's unpaid balance due.

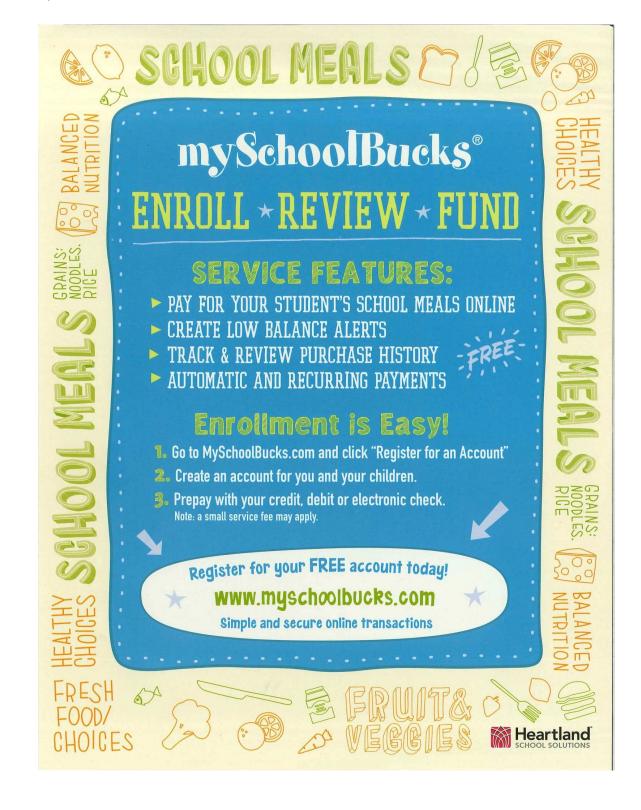
MINIMIZING STUDENT DISTRESS

- School will not publicly identify or stigmatize any student on the line or discuss any outstanding meal debt in the presence of any other students.
- Students who incur meal charges will not be required to wear a wristband or handstamp, or to do chores or work to pay for meals.
- Schools will not throw away a meal after it has been served because of the student's inability to pay for the meal or because of previous meal charges.
- Schools will not take any action directed at a pupil to collect unpaid school meal fees.
- Schools will deal directly with parents/guardians regarding unpaid school meal fees

Cafeteria Staff Training

Each fall, the entire cafeteria staff, during review of this plan, will continue to be trained as to how to respond to children whose parent or guardian has unpaid meal fees. (The correct response is to simply log the child's meal into the tracking system. No mention of a balance due is allowed.) This is to ensure that the child is not publicly or privately shamed or treated differently than a pupil whose parent or guardian does not have unpaid school meal fees. The District will continue its policy of not requiring any in-kind services from a student to pay for a meal.

Staff will be trained annually and throughout the year as needed on the procedures for managing meal charges using the NYSED Webinar or the school's training program. Staff training includes ongoing eligibility certification for free or reduced price meals.



- Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals/Milk

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

To apply for free and reduced price meals, complete only one application for your household using the instructions below. Sign the application and return the application to

delay in approving your application.

PART 1 ALL HOUSEHOLDS MUST COMPLETE STUDENT INFORMATION. DO NOT FILL OUT MORE THAN ONE APPLICATION FOR YOUR HOUSEHOLD.

- (1) Print the names of the children, including foster children, for whom you are applying on one application.
- (2) List their grade and school.
- (3) Check the box to indicate a foster child living in your household, or if you believe any child meets the description for homeless, migrant, runaway (a school staff will confirm this eligibility).

- PART 2 HOUSEHOLDS GETTING SNAP, TANF OR FDPIR SHOULD COMPLETE PART 2 AND SIGN PART 4.

 (1) List a current SNAP, TANF or FDPIR (Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations) case number of anyone living in your household. The case number is provided on your benefit letter.
- (2) An adult household member must sign the application in PART 4. SKIP PART 3. Do not list names of household members or income if you list a SNAP case number, TANF or FDPIR number.

PART 3 ALL OTHER HOUSEHOLDS MUST COMPLETE THESE PARTS AND ALL OF PART 4.

- (1) Write the names of everyone in your household, whether or not they get income. Include yourself, the children you are applying for, all other children, your spouse, grandparents, and other related and unrelated people in your household. Use another piece of paper if you need more space.
- (2) Write the amount of current income each household member receives, before taxes or anything else is taken out, and indicate where it came from, such as earnings, welfare, pensions and other income. If the current income was more or less than usual, write that person's usual income. Specify how often this income amount is received: weekly, every other week (bi-weekly), 2 x per month, monthly. If no income, check the box. The value of any child care provided or arranged, or any amount received as payment for such child care or reimbursement for costs incurred for such care under the Child Care and Development Block Grant, TANF and At Risk Child Care Programs should not be considered as income for this program.
- (3) Enter the total number of household members in the box provided. This number should include all adults and children in the household and should reflect the members listed in PART 1 and PART 3.
- (4) The application must include the last four digits only of the social security number of the adult who signs PART 4 if Part 3 is completed. If the adult does not have a social security number, check the box. If you listed a SNAP, TANF or FDPIR number, a social security number is not needed.
- (5) An adult household member must sign the application in PART 4.

OTHER BENEFITS: Your child may be eligible for benefits such as Medicaid or Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). To determine if your child is eligible, program officials need information from your free and reduced price meal application. Your written consent is required before any information may be released. Please refer to the attached parent Disclosure Letter and Consent Statement for information about other benefits.

USE OF INFORMATION STATEMENT

Use of Information Statement: The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires the information on this application. You do not have to give the information, but if you do not submit all needed information, we cannot approve your child for free or reduced price meals. You must include the last four digits of the social security number of the primary wage earner or other adult household member who signs the application. The social security number is adjits of the social security flutther of the primary wage earner or other about nouserious menitoer who sighs the application. The social security number is not required when you apply on behalf of a foster child or you list a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Temporary Assistance for Needy. Families (TANF) Program or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) case number or other FDPIR identifier for your child or when you indicate that the adult household member signing the application does not have a social security number. We will use your information to determine if your child is eligible for free or reduced price meals, and for administration and enforcement of the funch and breakfast programs.

We may share your eligibility information with education, health, and nutrition programs to help them evaluate, fund, or determine benefits for their programs, auditors for program reviews, and law enforcement officials to help them look into violations of program rules

DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS

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, audiotape, 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 <u>USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form</u>, (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:

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

To apply for free and reduce nousehold, sign your name may be listed on a separate	and return it t	for your c	hildren, read the instru Iress listed below. C	uctions on the back, co all <u>(phone number)</u> , if y	ou need help. Addi	itional nar
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WORCESTER CENTRAL SCHOOL

198 Main St., Worcester, NY 12197 Phone (607) 397-8785 • Fax (607) 397-9454 www.worcestercs.org

August 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Worcester Central School offers healthy meals every school day.

Breakfast costs \$1.00, lunch costs \$2.25. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals. Reduced price is \$.25 for breakfast and \$.25 for lunch.

1. Do I need to fill out an application for each child? No. Complete the application to apply for free or reduced price meals. Use one Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application for all students in your household. We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information. Return the completed application to:

Mr. Calleja, Café Manager or Mrs. Head, in the Main Office, Worcester Central School, 198 Main St., Worcester, N.Y. 12197, phone #397-8785.

2. Who can get free meals? All children in households receiving benefits from SNAP, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations or TANF, can get free meals regardless of your income. Also, your children can get free meals if your household's gross income is within the free limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines.

3. Can foster children get free meals? Yes, foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court, are eligible for free meals. Any foster child in the household is eligible for free meals regardless of income.

4. Can homeless, runaway, and migrant children get free meals? Yes, children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant qualify for free meals. If you haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call or e-mail

Mrs. Kimberlea Curran or Mrs. Jessie Westfall, school homeless liaisons, at #397-8785 or kcurran@worcestercs.org or jwestfall@worcestercs.org to see if they qualify.

5. Who can get reduced price meals? Your children can get low cost meals if your household income is within the reduced price limits on the Federal Eligibility Income Chart, shown on this application.

6. Should I fill out an application if I received a letter this school year saying my children are approved for free meals? Please read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. Call the school at #397-8785 if you have questions.

7. My child's application was approved last year. Do I need to fill out another one? Yes. Your child's application is only good for that school year and for the first 30 days of this school year. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year.

8.1 get WIC. Can my child(ren) get free meals? Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please fill out a FREE/REDUCED PRICE MEAL APPLICATION.

9. Will the information I give be checked? Yes, and we may also ask you to send written proof.

10. If I don't qualify now, may I apply later? Yes, you may apply at any time during the school year. For example, children with a parent or guardian who becomes unemployed may become eligible for free and reduced price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.

11. What if I disagree with the school's decision about my application? You should talk to school officials. You also may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to: Mrs. Jessie Westfall, Principal, Worcester Central School, 198 Main St., Worcester, N.Y. 12197, #397-8785.

12. May I apply if someone in my household is not a U.S. citizen? Yes. You or your child(ren) do not have to be U.S. citizens to qualify for free or reduced price meals.

13. Who should I include as members of my household? You must include all people living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends) who share income and expenses. You must include yourself and all children living with you. If you live with other people who are economically independent (for example, people who you do not support, who do not share income with you or your children, and who pay a prorated share of expenses), do not include them.

14. What if my income is not always the same? List the amount that you normally receive. For example, if you normally make \$1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only made \$900, put down that you made \$1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but do not include it if you only work overtime sometimes. If you have lost a job or had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income.

- 15. We are in the military. Do we include our housing allowance as income? If you get an off-base housing allowance, it must be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income.
- 16. My spouse is deployed to a combat zone, is her combat pay counted as income? No, if the combat pay is received in addition to her basic pay because of her deployment and it wasn't received before she was deployed, combat pay is not counted as income. Contact your school for more information.
- 17. My family needs more help. Are there other programs we might apply for? To find out how to apply for SNAP or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call 1-800-342-3009.

2017-2018 INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS OR FREE MILK REDUCED PRICE ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART

Total Family Size 1	Annual	Monthly	Twice per Month	Every 2 Weeks	Weekly
	\$ 22,311	\$ 1,860	\$930	\$ 859	\$ 430
	30,044	2,504	1,252	1,156	578
	37,777	3,149	1,575	1,453	727
	45,510	3,793	1,897	1,751	876
	53,243	4,437	2,219	2,048	1,024
	60,967	5,082	2,541	2,346	1,173
	68,709	5,726	2,863	2,643	1,322
	76,442	6,371	3,186	2,941	1,471
For each additional family member add	+ 7,733	+ 645	+ 323	+ 298	+ 149

How to Apply: To get free or reduced price meals for your children carefully complete one application for your household and return it to the designated office. If you now receive SNAP, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) for any children, or participate in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), the application must include the children's names, the household food stamp, TANF or FDPIR case number and the signature of an adult household member. All children should be listed on the same application. If you do not list a food stamp, TANF or FDPIR case number for all the children for whom you are applying, the application must include the names of everyone in the household, the amount of income for each household member, and how often it is received and where it comes from. It must include the signature of an adult household member and the last four digits of that adult's social security number, or check the box if the adult does not have a social security number. An application that is not complete cannot be approved. Contact your local Department of Social Services for your food stamp or TANF case number or complete the income portion of the application.

Reporting Changes: The benefits that you are approved for at the time of application are effective for the entire school year. You no longer need to report changes for an increase in income or decrease in household size, or if you no longer receive SNAP.

Income Exclusions: The value of any child care provided or arranged, or any amount received as payment for such child care or reimbursement for costs incurred for such care under the Child Care Development (Block Grant) Fund should not be considered as income for this program.

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, audiotape, 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:

4 - Weekly "Robo-Call"

"Hello, this is the Worcester Central School District, calling to let you know that your student <<First Name>> <<Last Name>>, has a school cafeteria balance of negative <<Speakable Balance>> dollars. We would appreciate payment as soon as possible. If you need help with establishing a payment plan, you may either log onto the Www.myschoolbucks.com webpage and register for an account, or contact Mr. Joe Calleja, Cafeteria Manager, at 607-397-8785, for further information regarding a payment plan or assistance with the Free/Reduced application. If you wish to replay this message please press the star key now. Thank you."