

EMPOWERMENT ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL

240 Ege Street  
Jersey City, NJ 07304



## CHARGE MEAL POLICY / OUTSTANDING MEAL CHARGE POLICY

### 18A:33-21 Provision of school meals.

1. a In the event a student's school lunch or breakfast bill is in arrears, the Building Principal or designee shall contact the student's parent/guardian to provide notice of the arrearage and shall provide the parent/guardian with a period of 10 school days to pay the full amount due. If the student's parent/guardian has not made full payment by the end of the ten school days, the Head Dean or designee shall again contact the student's parent/guardian to provide a second notice that their child's lunch or breakfast bill is in arrears. If payment in full is not made within one week from the date of the second notice, the district shall again contact the student's parent or guardian to provide notice of any action to be taken by the school district in response to the student's school or breakfast or school lunch bill being in arrears.

A school district shall report at least biannually to the Department of Agriculture the number of students who are denied school breakfast or lunch pursuant to this section.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to require a school district to deny or restrict access to school breakfast or school lunch to a student whose school breakfast or school lunch bill is in arrears.

b. A school district shall not:

- (1) publicly identify or stigmatize a student who cannot pay for a school breakfast or a school lunch or whose school breakfast or school lunch bill is in arrears, for example, by requiring that the student sit at a separate table or wear a wristband, hand stamp, or identifying mark or by serving the student an alternative meal;
- (2) require a student who cannot pay for school breakfast, or a school lunch or whose school breakfast or school lunch bill is in arrears to do chores or other work to pay for the school breakfast or school lunch; or
- (3) require a student to discard a school breakfast or school lunch after it has been served because of the student's inability to pay for a school breakfast or a school lunch or because money is owed for previously provided meals.

c. If a student owes money for the equivalent of five or more meals, a school district shall:

- (1) determine if the student is eligible for a free or reduced-price school meal;
- (2) make at least two attempts, not including the application or instructions provided to the parent or guardian pursuant to section 3 of P.L.2020, c.29 (C.18A:33-21b), to contact the student's parent or guardian and have the parent or guardian fill out an application for the school lunch program and school breakfast program; and
- (3) require a principal, or a person designated by the principal, to contact the parent or guardian to offer assistance with the application for the school lunch and school breakfast

program, determine if there are other issues within the household that have caused the child to have insufficient funds to purchase a school breakfast or school lunch, and offer any other appropriate assistance.

d A school district shall direct communications about a student's school breakfast or school lunch bill being in arrears to the parent or guardian and not the student. Nothing in this subsection shall prohibit a school district from sending a student home with a letter addressed to a parent or guardian.

A parent/guardian who has received a second notice that their child's lunch or breakfast bill is in arrears and who has not made payment in full within one week from the date of the second notice will be requested to meet with the Head Dean or designee to discuss and resolve the matter. In the event the parent/guardian refuses to meet with the Head Dean or designee or is unable to resolve the matter, it may be indicative of more serious problems in the family or household. Under these circumstances, the Head Dean or designee is directed to seek support from social service agencies for the family or household, and to report the parent/guardian's failure/inability to provide breakfast or lunch, as applicable, for the child to the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency.

If a parent/guardian no longer has children enrolled in the school district, or becomes eligible for free meals, the parent/guardian may request reimbursement of any balance in a child's account. Funds for students continuing with the school the following school year will remain in the account for the next school year.

The provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21 and this Policy will be made available to parent/guardians of all children in the school district in a manner as determined by the Head Dean.