

# Franklin Towne Charter Elementary School

## Food Service Department

### MEAL CHARGE POLICY

#### **PURPOSE:**

Franklin Towne Charter Elementary School (FTCES) contracts with a Food Service Management Company (FSMC) to facilitate the daily operations of the Food Service Department. FTCES utilizes an electronic Point of Sales (POS) cash collection system to charge, count, and record school meals. As part of this system, parents/guardians are able to make deposits into their child's/children's account(s).

FTCES offers the following options for depositing funds into a student's account:

1. Parents/guardians are directed to the school's website where they are afforded the opportunity to open an account through the PaySchools Central system at [www.payschoolscentral.com](http://www.payschoolscentral.com) which is connected to the SFA's PaySchools POS system. Once an account is created, parents/guardians can add funds to the student's account electronically.
2. Parents/guardians can also send cash/check/money-order in an envelope labeled with the student's name, homeroom, and "Food Account" to the school. The money is then manually applied to the student's account by the cashier at the POS terminal.
3. Students can give cash/check/money-order directly to the cashier during breakfast service or lunch service and request that the money be placed onto their account.

Funds can be placed on student accounts at any time, however meals are not charged, counted, or recorded until the actual date that the meal is purchased by the student. No meals are charged, counted, or recorded for reimbursement prior to, or after, the actual date of service.

At times, certain accounts may become negative and require the parent/guardian to deposit additional funds into their child's/children's account(s), and/or remit payment to the school for the negative account balance. This policy provides guidance for the collection of these funds.

## **GUIDELINES:**

- School meals are available to all students, and it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide their child/children with a meal, or money to purchase a meal.
- Any student that requests a school meal will be provided one, regardless of the availability of funds, either on hand, or in their account, and the student's account is charged for said meal(s).
- Once a student incurs an outstanding negative balance for five (5) or more meals, the school makes a minimum of two (2) attempts to contact the parent/guardian, via phone calls and emails, regarding:
  - The delinquent debt on the student's food account
  - Acceptable methods of payment for the food program
  - Information on how to apply for Free/Reduced priced meals
- Communication regarding a student's school meal debt will be directed to the parent/guardian, not the student, and will remain confidential
- Students will be allowed to continue to charge meals, regardless of whether the school has been successful in contacting the parent/guardian
- The school will not publicly identify or stigmatize the student, will not force the student to do chores, and will not direct the student to discard a meal that has been served to them, based on the inability to pay for the meal at the time the meal was served
- Students who have unpaid charged meals may **not** purchase a la carte items until the delinquent debt is paid
- If a family is having difficulty paying for school meals, it is encouraged that they apply for Free/Reduced price meals as follows:
  - Applications are available online at [www.schoolcafe.com](http://www.schoolcafe.com)
  - Paper applications are available at the school's Front Office

## **COLLECTING OF DELINQUENT DEBT:**

- The school will continue to pursue delinquent debt on a student's account throughout the school year via communications with the parent/guardian
- If necessary, invoices are sent via US mail to the household for funds due to the school for the negative account balance
- The school may only withhold meals from a student if it receives a written directive from the parent/guardian indicating that the student may not charge school meals; the school will maintain this documentation for records and refer the matter to the School Guidance Counselor
- In the event that delinquent debts are deemed uncollectable, the school will recover the funds from non-federal sources outside of the Food Service Account; monies will be transferred from the General Fund to the Food Service Account to cover the bad debt by the end of the fiscal year

**If assistance is needed to complete an application, establish an electronic account, and/or remit payment, please contact the school 215-289-3389.**