

# Thomas Edison EnergySmart Charter School



## ***Cafeteria Charge Policy***

Parents are encouraged to put money "On Account" for their students through our Mealtime Online System. Parents can monitor their child's account balances as well as sign up to receive automatic emails when your child's balance reaches a set limit.

TEECS understands a student may forget to bring breakfast or lunch, as applicable, or money to purchase breakfast or lunch to school on a school day. When this happens, the food service program will provide a student a breakfast or lunch with an expectation payment will be made the next school day or shortly thereafter. However, there may be circumstances when payment is not made and a student's school breakfast or lunch bill is in arrears (incurs a negative balance). ***TEECS will manage a student's breakfast or lunch bill that is in arrears in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21 and this policy.***

In the event a student's school lunch or breakfast bill is in arrears, the student will continue to receive lunch or breakfast and their account will be charged accordingly. The Director of Food Services or Designee shall contact the student's parent via email to provide notice of the amount in arrears and shall provide the parent a period of ***10 school days*** to pay the full amount due. If the student's parent does not make full payment by the end of the ***10 school days***, the Director of Food Services or Designee shall again contact the student's parent to provide a **second notice** that their child's breakfast or lunch bill is in arrears.

The Director of Food Services or Designee will also inform the student's Lead Person at that time. If payment in full is not made ***within one week from the date of the second notice***, the student will not be permitted to buy a la cart items or snacks until the balance has been paid. The student's meal account will be set to cash only so no additional charges can be made to the balance.

A parent 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 Lead Person to discuss and resolve the matter.

A parent's refusal to meet or take other steps to resolve the matter may be indicative of more serious issues in the family or household. In these situations, the Lead Person shall consult with and seek necessary services from the County Board of Social Services and the Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency, as appropriate.

When a parent's routine failure to provide breakfast or lunch is reasonably suspected to be indicative of child abuse or neglect, the Lead Person shall immediately report such suspicion to the Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency as required in N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.10. Such reporting shall not be delayed to accommodate a parent's meeting with the Principal.

If the student's breakfast or lunch bill is in arrears, but the student has the money to purchase breakfast or lunch, the student will be provided breakfast or lunch and the food service program will not use the student's money to repay previously unpaid charges if the student intended to use the money to purchase that day's meal.

The food service program will prevent the overt identification of children through the method of payment used to purchase a meal and whose breakfast or lunch bill is in arrears.

In accordance with the provisions of the United States Department of Agriculture, this policy shall be provided to all parents/guardians at the start of each school year and to students transferring to TEECS during the school year. In addition, TEECS will post this policy on the school website.

This policy shall also be provided to all school and food service staff responsible for the enforcement of this policy, including school administrators to ensure this policy is supported.

The food service program will comply with all meal charge policy requirements of the United States and New Jersey Department of Agriculture and N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21.