

# Free and Reduced-Price School Meals Policy

Business Operations Policy 7502

Approved: 11/2/2016

Revised: 11/17/18



## I. PURPOSE

Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish offers healthy meals for students every school day. Some children may qualify for free or reduced-price school meals.

## II. POLICY

- A. Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish will send an *Household Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals* form to the households of all enrolled students prior to the beginning of each school year explaining eligibility for and the process of applying for free or reduced-price school meals.
- B. Free or reduced-price meals are available for children who qualify.
  1. If a family qualifies for free or reduced-price meals, the *Household Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals* form must be completed each school year and submitted to the front office within the first 15 days of the school year to prevent any gaps in benefits.
  2. Families may apply for free or reduced-price lunches any time during the school year, and should apply if the family's financial circumstances change.
  3. Once the application is either approved or denied, Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish will send a notification letter to the household eligible for free or reduced-price meals.
  4. Those receiving free or reduced-price meals will have those prices carried over for the first 30 school days of the next school year or until Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish receives a new application.
- C. Parent/guardians of all students are encouraged to submit an *Household Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals* form even if their child does not intend to eat school meals, as unexpected circumstances may arise and students may eat a school meal. In order for benefits to apply, this form **must** already be on file.
  1. Kindergarten students are eligible to receive school meals and as such, are encouraged to submit an *Household Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals* as well.

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- D. School breakfast and lunch prices will be determined annually based on federal reimbursement rates.
1. Any intended changes to the cost of school meals will be available to parent/guardians prior to the start of the school year.
  2. The preferred payment method for school meals is online through Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish's website.
  3. Students are allowed to charge up to \$15 on their school meal accounts.
  4. Any student whose lunch debt exceeds \$15 will be offered an alternative meal and charged a reduced price set by the Lead School Administrator, not to exceed 80% of a full-priced meal.
  5. Parent/guardians will be notified when a student's balance becomes overdrawn and again when it reaches a debt of \$10.
    - a. This notification shall outline the consequences of not paying the bill including the provisioning of alternative meals and any steps taken pursuant to *Student Policy 5605 – Student Fees*.
    - b. This notification shall include an *Household Application for Free and Reduced Price School Meals* in the student's home language.
  6. Substantially overdrawn accounts will be referred to the Lead School Administrator and the school's Social Worker.
  7. Efforts will be taken to ensure that the means of notification does not demean or stigmatize any student participating in the program.
- E. No student shall be denied access to an adequately nutritious meal due to a family's inability to pay.
- F. Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish will make every effort to eliminate any social stigma attached to, and prevent the overt identification of, students who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.