

Adopted: November 14, 2022

COMMUNITY OF PEACE ACADEMY POLICY No. 5.9.1 MEAL CHARGE

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to have a written and clearly communicated policy to address unpaid meal charges in accordance with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and Minnesota law, as required of all school food authorities (SFAs) operating federal school meal programs.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

Community of Peace Academy is committed to providing a school environment that encourages and supports children's health, well-being, and ability to learn. CPA recognizes that balanced nutrition fosters good physical, mental and emotional health. Students with good physical, mental and emotional health are more likely to have improved attendance, and can more easily attend to their learning. To this end, CPA has established a Meal Charge policy that is flexible, supportive, and does not deny any child a meal.

III. MEAL BENEFITS

All families are encouraged to complete a Meal Benefit Application at the start of each school year. Applications are included in August registration materials and can be completed and turned in to CPA staff during August Registration. Applications are also available from the main office or from the cafeteria supervisor and may be completed online at <https://www.schoolpay.com/>.

Family Engagement Specialists and School Social Workers conduct outreach to those families who have not completed a Meal Benefit application to encourage meal application completion. Other school staff, such as Principals, Deans, and/or teachers are also asked to reach out to specific families to encourage meal application completion as helpful.

IV. MEAL COSTS

Breakfast is provided free of charge to all enrolled students. Fresh Fruit and Vegetable snacks are provided free of charge to all students in grades PreK-4. After School Snacks are provided free of charge to all students participating in eligible after-school

programming. The cost of school lunch is established and communicated to families annually.

V. MEAL CHARGING

Students are allowed to charge up to \$20.00 for school lunches and may choose from the standard lunch menu with no limitations. When that \$20.00 charge limit is reached or exceeded, the Cafeteria Supervisor and the School Business Office will notify the family of the balance due.

VI. NOTIFICATION OF NEGATIVE BALANCE

Beginning in October of each school year, parents/guardians of students with a negative balance of any amount in their lunch accounts are notified via email, phone call, and written letter. Notification is also sent anytime a student's account reaches a negative balance of \$20.00.

The notification informs parents/guardians of the balance due and informs them of payment options as well as resources to complete a meal application. The letter also informs parents/guardians that if the balance is not paid, an alternative lunch will be served to their child.

VI. NO PROVISION OF ALTERNATIVE MEALS

If a student's account is not brought into good standing following written notice of Balance Due, good faith outreach efforts will continue on the part of the Cafeteria Supervisor and school personnel to support the family. The student will continue to be provided a regular meal.

VII. RESPECTFUL TREATMENT

Every effort will be made to provide an alternative lunch discretely so as to avoid stigmatization. CPA and contracted food service staff may not withdraw a meal that has been served, dump a meal, announce or list students' names publicly or affix stickers or other identifying markers of students with a negative meal balance or whose meal fund is insufficient to pay for their lunch.

Student participation in school activities, graduation ceremonies, field trips, athletics, activity clubs, or other extracurricular activities; and student access to materials,

technology, or other resources may not be restricted due to an unpaid student meal balance.

VII. FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR NEGATIVE LUNCH ACCOUNT BALANCES

Families needing assistance paying negative balances will be referred to the appropriate School Social Worker for resources. With administrative approval, families may establish repayment plans or CPA Angel Funds may be used to pay off negative lunch account balances. CPA does not use collection agencies to collect unpaid school meals debt.

VIII. POLICY DISTRIBUTION

CPA will make the policy and updates to the policy available to students, staff, families, and the general public.

1. The policy will be posted on the CPA website.
2. The policy will be included, in summarized form, in the Family Handbook.
3. The policy will be provided in writing to all staff who are responsible for serving and counting meals, collecting payments, notifying families of low/negative balances, and enforcing the policy.

IX. CIVIL RIGHTS STATEMENT

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged

discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

(1) **mail:** U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or

(2) **fax:** (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or

(3) **email:** program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

X. CONTACT INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

Families seeking assistance with applying for free or reduced price meals may contact the CPA Food Director:

Bonnie Johnson bonniej@cpapk12.org
651-280-457

XI. RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL

The CPA Executive Director is responsible for unpaid meal charges:

Tim McGowan
timm@cpapk12.org 651-280-4588