St. Joseph Catholic STEM School participates in the Minnesota Free School Meals program as outlined in Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 124D.111, subdivision 1. In addition, this policy is to ensure that school district employees, families and students understand the expectations regarding unpaid meal charges:

Meal Service
St. Joseph Catholic STEM School participates in the Minnesota Free School Meals Program, and therefore, all enrolled students will be offered one breakfast and one lunch at no charge while at school, regardless of an outstanding meal balance. Once a meal has been placed on a student's tray or served, it will not be taken away by the cashier or any school official, regardless of the student's meal account status. All reimbursable meals offered meet state and federal guidelines. We will not provide an alternate meal unless related to a dietary need.

Point of service
For St. Joseph Catholic STEM School to receive State and Federal reimbursement for meals served, each student must be identified at the point of service.

Breakfast:
Students who have breakfast will be entered into the POS system, and these numbers are verified after service.

Lunch:
Teachers will ask each student in attendance if they are having lunch and enter it into our POS system. When the students are in the lunchroom, they go to the POS station and be asked for their personal PIN, which is entered into the POS to confirm their lunch by a staff member. The lunch counts are then verified by office personnel after lunchtime is completed for the day. All students will be treated respectfully and in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 2024, section 124D.111, subdivision 5.

Nonprogram Food Sales

To meet the non-program food revenue requirement, the nutrition program must charge and accrue revenue for items outside of the reimbursable breakfast and lunch it chooses to sell.

Non-program food Sales are any food or beverage sold outside of the reimbursable meal, including second meal and snacks.

Self-operated and vended meal/Food Service Management Company-operated sites should manage second breakfasts and lunches at the site level.

Second meals or adult Staff meals and student snacks are set up as an ala carte menu and are not included in the Free and Reduced calculation. These numbers are counted the same as above but are separate from State Funding.

Unpaid Meal Charges
Prior year unpaid meal charges

St. Joseph Catholic STEM School does not utilize a debt collection agency to recover unpaid meal balances.The school uses its point-of-sale system (Educate) to notify families when meal account balances become negative. In addition to automated notifications, school office staff will personally contact families to communicate low or negative balances and work toward resolution.

The school is committed to working with families in a respectful and supportive manner to resolve unpaid balances.This updated policy ensures compliance with state requirements and will be implemented immediately. The Minnesota Free Meals Program does not address debt incurred before the program's implementation.

St. Joseph Catholic STEM School will continue to utilize its local process for addressing delinquent meal accounts. We will send alerts and if necessary, make a phone call to collect funds before the end of the school year. If this is not addressed, we will roll over the unpaid funds to the next year so that funds can be collected prior to the beginning of the new school year. The Minnesota Free School Meals Program pertains only to reimbursable meals. This policy and any pertinent supporting information will be provided in the student handbook on our website.

Communication:
This policy and any pertinent supporting information will be provided in via the school website in the student handbook which should be read by all parents prior to the beginning of the new school year or at enrollment if new to the school.

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