

Child Nutrition Program- Policy & Procedures

1. Background - Good nutrition is essential for students to do their best in school. This means every child should have a good breakfast and lunch, especially on school days.
2. Parent/guardians are responsible for ensuring that nutritional meals are available for their children by:
 - a. Sending their students to school with bagged meals,
 - b. Paying for meals available at school, or
 - c. Qualifying for free, or reduced price, meals through the New Jersey Department of Agriculture's *Child Nutrition Program* (see section #3 for description)
3. New Jersey's Child Nutrition Program can provide Free or Reduced Price Meals to school children.
 - a. The Child Nutrition Program is funded by the New Jersey Department of Agriculture.
 - b. Children can determine if they qualify for the Child Nutrition Program by submitting an application through the Mount Carmel Guild Academy.
 - c. The application must be submitted in order to qualify for free or reduced price meals. Without a complete application, free or reduced price meals can not be provided to the children.
 - d. Applications should be submitted annually to the school. The process begins in August.
4. Who qualifies for the Child Nutrition Program?
 - a. Foster children and households receiving SNAP (food stamps) or TANF automatically qualify for free meals if an application is submitted.
 - b. Other children may qualify for free or reduced cost meals based on household income (as specified by Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines)
5. Billing and Collection for Meals
 - a. The school is required by State law to collect monies from parents/guardians for meals served to children who did not submit or qualify for the Free Meal program, and for children who qualify and pay for a Reduced Price Meal.

- i. The Mount Carmel Guild schools will bill parents/guardians monthly for meals provided to the children who have not enrolled in the program.
 - b. Bills will be mailed to the parent's/guardian's home address by the 15th of the month.
 - c. The school will make a sustained and concerted effort to contact parents/guardians through various methods in order to collect payments due for school meals. All efforts and attempts should be documented. These efforts may can take place as follows:
 - i. In person at school meetings
 - ii. Notes sent home with students
 - iii. Letters via US Mail
 - iv. Email
 - v. Telephone
 - d. Parents/guardians with balances due will be sent statements monthly until funds are collected. Parents/guardians are expected to promptly send in payment when billed.
6. MCG Schools will maintain student files in connection with the Child Nutrition Program. Each student's file will contain:
 - a. Copy of a dated annual letter, application, and MCG Schools policy (i.e., this document) advising all parents/guardians of the availability of this program.
 - b. Copy of completed and signed application received back from parents/guardians (date stamped upon receipt).
 - c. Notification letter informing each parent/guardian of their child's status within the Child Nutrition Program.
 - d. Monthly statements sent to parent/guardian (if applicable)
 - e. Payment log
 - f. Follow up letters (if any) for initial applications or collections
 - g. Telephone & eMail log of contacts/attempted contacts with parent/guardian
 - h. Files will be retained for 3 school years.
7. Questions regarding this policy should be directed to MCG Schools to the attention of Callie Johnson at 973-325-4400, x101.

References: N.J.A.C. 6A:23-4.5(a) 20

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