

Approved by: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

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POLICY 337 - Meals Payment and Collection Policy

It is the intent of Turquoise Trail Charter School to provide an opportunity for every student to eat a nutritious breakfast and lunch during the school day. It is also the intent of TTCS to comply with all federal program regulations pertaining to the National School Breakfast and National School Lunch Programs.

Students must remit payment for meals prior to or at time of service.

The goals of TTCS payment and collection procedures are:

- To maintain a positive experience for students during meal service.
- To treat all students with dignity and respect.
- To establish practices which are age-appropriate.
- To minimize meal charges and encourage parents to pre-pay for all meals.
- To promote parents' responsibility for meal payments and self-responsibility of the student.

TTCS Pre-paid Meal System: The school meal accounting system is a pre-paid system. Parents or guardians should deposit money into their child's account before meals are served. Payments can be made daily, weekly, monthly, or annually. In addition to using cash and checks, parents can also pay online on the school's website with their credit/debit cards. It is the ***guardian/parent's responsibility*** to make sure that sufficient funds are in the account or a home-prepared meal is sent to school with their child.

Billing Procedures: The school will bill families for outstanding charges in excess of \$5 by sending a billing statement home with their student in a sealed envelope. Billing statements with an outstanding balance greater than \$100 will be mailed to the home address. Statements are sent once per month, and are due within 14 days of the billing date. Also, students may always check the current balance of their students account on the school's web portal (currently Family Link).

Payment Prior to filling out USDA Free and Reduced Application: All meals eaten before a Free and Reduced-Price application is processed and approved are the responsibility of the parent/guardian and must be paid for as required by law. Should the student's application be approved for free or reduced price meals, any future billing will reflect the new status and the parent will be notified of the result of their application by a letter mailed to the home address.

Non-Payment TTCS Standard Procedure: If a student cannot pay for lunch, an alternate sack lunch meal consisting of: 2 oz. bread/grain, 2 oz. meat/meat alternate, salad bar and a carton of milk will be provided to the student. Students who have documented dietary needs will be given a meal that meets the nutritional guidelines and the specifications of their diet restrictions if an alternate meal is thus needed. This program will initiate when a family has an unpaid balance for meals that is 30 days past due, and exceeds \$50. Monies received from students with outstanding past due account balances must first be used to satisfy the outstanding balance, and alternative meals will continue to

be provided until the account is no longer past due. No change will be given back to parents/students with negative account balances and any extra monies will be deposited into the student's account.

Payment in advance for meals enables TTCS to achieve approved goals:

Emergency Meal Service: Turquoise Trail Charter School acknowledges that on occasion, students may forget or lose meal money to pay on student account. In such cases, the child's statement of need shall be accepted and food will be made available based upon on a site administrative decision.

Evaluate Individual Circumstances: When a student repeatedly comes to school without a meal from home or money to participate in the pre-paid school meal program, TTCS school administrators will consider if circumstances in the home warrant contacting social workers or Child Protective Services. Frequent requests may indicate the family's need for free or reduced-price meals. If for any reason, parents decline to complete an eligibility application and the principal is aware that the student is eligible for free or reduced-price meals, the principal/business office may complete an application on behalf of the student. Written justification must be made on the application as to the reason the student should be receiving free or reduced-price meals.

Repayment for Meal Charges and Bad Checks: Federal guidelines prohibit TTCS from writing off bad debts as a result of charged meals. Every effort will be made to collect for unpaid meals. The school reserves the right to use the services of a debt collection agency when charges exceed \$300 and every effort has been made to make payment arrangements with the family with no success.

Unpaid meal charges will result in the following:

- A letter of explanation of past due charges will be mailed to guardian/parent prior to changing the child's meals to the alternate meals.
- Automated telephone call home and an email will be sent to guardian/parent
- In case of significant delinquent payments, TTCS reserves to right to take legal action

USDA Program: In partnering with USDA, Turquoise Trail Charter School will adhere in accordance with Federal civil rights law and U. S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees. Institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

Email: program.intake@usda.gov

Turquoise Trail Charter School is an equal opportunity provider under the USDA guidelines.