

Fired New Hampshire Lunch lady being dishonest says food vendor in statement

Here is the media statement from Café Services, Inc.'s Facebook page regarding the firing of Mascoma Valley Regional High School food service employee Bonnie Kimball **who claimed she was fired for giving a hungry student a free lunch.**

"Fresh Picks Café President Brian Stone said, The student in these stories got a lunch.

Students at Mascoma Valley get a lunch regardless of whether they can pay. They receive a healthy lunch of an entrée or sandwich, plus side dishes or fresh fruit and milk. School policy is no additional items like cookies can be charged, they have to have money in their account or must pay cash. An employee would not be let go because they provided the healthy standard lunch to a student.

The student, in this case, came down the line with a full lunch plus oven fries and 2 packages of cookies. When the student got up to the cashier, she grabbed a Powerade and added it to his tray, then let the student take the full lunch allowed by school policy and also the four additional items. Not only should she not have allowed the additional a la carte items, but she did not record or charge any of the items, including the main lunch, to the student account so they could be paid in the future.

How many kids each day show up without enough lunch money for everything they want?

What do you do? You have procedures in place that make sure kids can have something to eat and you make sure the school's dollars are handled responsibly.

In consultation with the school district about the current policies for handling student transactions, we have offered to rehire our recently terminated employee and provide her back pay and we will work with the school district to revise policies and procedures regarding transactions. We will then work with our manager and this employee on these policies.

As a bigger issue, not every student has money to pay for lunch. We deal with this every day at Mascoma Valley, where all students can receive a full healthy lunch, regardless of ability to pay, and for students not on a free or reduced lunch plan, the balance is accrued. This issue of food insecurity affects communities across the country and we at Fresh Picks work sensitively with students every day. At the end of the day, it's about kids being fed."