

Unpaid Meal Charges

The School believes that all students should have access to healthy school lunches and wishes to minimize identification of students with insufficient funds, but recognizes the need to protect the financial stability of the school nutrition program. The School, as a school food authority, has established the following procedures, which will be implemented beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, (a) to handle situations in which a student eligible for reduced-price or full-price meal benefits has insufficient funds to pay for school meals, and (b) to collect unpaid meal charges and delinquent account debt.

Parents and students shall continue to comply with any and all School requests and procedures regarding pre-selection of meals, if applicable.

Unpaid Meal Charge

Students who qualify for free meals will not be denied a reimbursable meal even if they have previously accrued a negative balance. However, in these circumstances, students may be prohibited from purchasing a la carte or extra items. Students with unpaid meal charge debt who attend School with money to pay for a reduced-price or full-price meal at the time of that meal's service must be provided a meal, even if that student has accrued a negative balance. The School will not use the money intended to purchase a day's meal for repayment of a negative balance or other unpaid meal charge debt.

If a student does not have funds to pay for a reduced-price or full price meal at the time of that meal's service, the student [check one]:

- 1. may charge the meal to the student's meal account, if meals are available. The student may charge up to _____ meal(s) or \$_____. Students who charge a meal will receive a reimbursable meal. However, the School may limit the entrée choice to a less expensive option.
- 2. may charge an alternative meal to the student's meal account, if alternative meals are available. The alternative meal items must be priced individually, meet Smart Snacks requirements, and accommodate special dietary needs. The student may charge up to \$_____.
- 3. may receive an alternative meal from the School at no cost to the student, if alternative meals are available. This meal does not need to meet Smart Snacks requirements, but must accommodate special dietary needs. The meal cost must be funded from a non-federal source.
- 4. may not charge a meal to the student's meal account and will not receive a meal that day.

The School will notify the parent in writing if a student's meal account falls below \$_____. This notification will include the amount of any low or negative balance, expected payment date, consequences of non-payment, and information regarding where families can find assistance with applying for free and reduced-priced meals.

Collection of Delinquent or Bad Debt

The School shall consider debt delinquent and shall request payment ten (10) school days after the date in which the School provides parental notice of a student's negative account balance. The Principal or his/her designee will work directly with households to collect any delinquent meal charge debt and shall be responsible for managing charges and delinquent debt owed to the School. At the Principal's or his/her designee's discretion, the School may establish repayment plans for the collection of debt. Delinquent debt and repayment plans may carry over to the next school year.

If the Principal or his/her designee determines that delinquent debt is uncollectible at the end of the school year, the debt will be considered "bad debt." Bad debt may not be carried over to the next school year. Bad debt must be restored to the School and Nutrition Program from the general fund prior to the end of the same fiscal year. Bad debt may not be recovered using federal funds.

Notification

The School will communicate this policy in writing to all students and households at the beginning of each school year and upon a change in a student's eligibility for meal benefits. Forms and information regarding free or reduced price lunch shall be available at the School office, and the Principal or his/her designee shall be available to answer questions regarding the meal program and any unpaid meal charge debt. The School shall not disclose the identities of students eligible for free or reduced-priced meals except to those individuals who require that information to carry out an activity authorized by the National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. 1751.

Community Eligibility Provision

Notwithstanding the above, if the Schools is a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) provider, the School shall provide reimbursable meals for breakfast and lunch to all students free of charge.

Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. 1751.