

## SCHOOL MEALS AND SNACKS MEAL CHARGE AND UNPAID MEAL REGULATION

### Purpose

Policy for Students with Insufficient Funds for School Meals and Delinquent Accounts in the School Nutrition Program.

The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs are integral in ensuring that students have access to nutritious meals to support their academic success. All Federal Guidelines will be followed and adhere.

The intent of this regulation is to establish a process and procedure to handle situations when children eligible for reduced-price or full-price meal benefits have insufficient funds to pay for school meals; as well as, for the collection of unpaid meal charges and delinquent account debt.

### Conditions

Students who have money to pay for a reduced-price or full price meal at the time of service must be provided a meal. If the student intended to use the money for that day's meal, the money will not be applied to any negative balance or other unpaid meal charge debt.

A la Carte items, except fruit and vegetables, are not allowed to be charged.

Students will not be made to work for their meal or to work to settle any unpaid meal charges. In addition, students will not be labeled with a hand stamp, sticker, wristband, or identified in any other way if they cannot pay for a meal or have an unpaid meal charge.

Students who charge will receive a full federal-defined meal.

Any positive balances at the end of the school year will transfer to the next school year, as well as, between schools, if applicable.

Notices of low or negative balances in a student's meal account are sent to parents/guardians and school principals.

All negative balances should be paid by the last day of school.

### Communicating the Policy

- This Regulation JHCH-R will be communicated to the household by posting on the Northumberland County Public School's website, [www.nucps.net](http://www.nucps.net), provided in the student information packet for new and transfer students throughout the school year, and attached to the Meal Benefits Application.
- School Nutrition Program (SNP) staff will receive training on Policy JHCH School Meals and Snacks Policy and JHCH-R Meal Charge Regulation. A record of the training will be maintained as part of the professional development portfolio.
- Documentation of the communication and training plan will be maintained for the Federal Program Administrative Review.

### Notifying the Household of Low or Negative Balance in Student Cafeteria Account

- The student's household will be notified when a student's cafeteria account falls below negative \$1.00.
- Myschoolbucks.com is a free website that parents/guardians may setup and access to view student's lunch accounts.
- E-mails and phone calls will be sent daily to households with negative balances.
- Notifications to households will include the amount of unpaid meal charges.

### Collection of Delinquent Meal Charge Debt

Bad debt is defined as delinquent debt that is deemed uncollectible at the end of the school year, and is considered bad debt for the purposes of federal law concerning unpaid meal charges.

School Nutrition Program staff and/or School Principals/Designees will direct any communication of a student's debt directly to the parent or guardian. School personnel will no longer communicate this information directly to the student. A letter addressed to the parent and sent home with the student is an acceptable form of communication.

Efforts to collect delinquent and/or bad debt will be handled by:

- A. Automated e-mails and phone calls.
- B. School Nutrition Manager or School Principal/Designee will make initial call and document contact.
- C. If a parent regularly fails to provide money to purchase school meals or fails to send food to school with the student and the student does not qualify for free or reduced benefits, the Food Service Director/Designee will inform the School Principal.

- D. The Food Service Director/Designee and School Principal will determine the next course of action, which may include one or more of the following:
1. requesting parent conference,
  2. notifying the department of social services of suspected child neglect,
  3. taking legal steps to recover the unpaid meal charges, and
  4. other actions as determined.

### Payment Options

School Nutrition Program school-based staff are able to receive payment for meals at the Point of Service.

Parents/Guardians can make payments to myschoolbucks.com account (credit card fees may be applicable).

### Assistance to Households

As an additional service to our families Northumberland County Public School's Food Service Department will offer assistance completing the free and reduced application during Back to School events and registration periods to ensure that students who qualify receive the proper meal plans at the start of the school year. Households with questions or needing assistance may contact the Food Service Director at: 804-580-8101 or e-mail [shamlett@nucps.net](mailto:shamlett@nucps.net)

### References

Reference 2 CFR Part 200 Section 143 of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010.