

UNPAID MEAL DEBT

The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs ensure that students have access to nutritious meals to support academic readiness. It is imperative to protect the financial stability of the School Nutrition Program. The intent of this policy is to establish expectations regarding communication with parents of students whose accounts have insufficient funds to pay for school meals and to outline fiduciary responsibility.

A. Communicating the Unpaid Meal Debt Policy. The written meal debt policy will be published and communicated in a variety of ways per federal law.

B. Fiduciary Responsibility.

1. Parents or guardians are responsible for all student meal expenses and are expected to pay all meal debts in full.

2. Students from families not qualified for free or reduced price meals are expected to provide payment for student meals at the time of service.

3. Students from households whose income is at or below federally designated financial levels may apply for free or reduced price meals.

4. Students whose accounts have insufficient funds will receive the advertised school menu meal of their choice. Meal options will not be changed, withheld or taken from a student with a zero or negative balance

a. Students will not be allowed to incur debt for a la carte items.

b. Students are prohibited from doing work or chores to pay down school meal debt.

5. Adults shall pay for meals at the time of service.

C. Notifying Households of Low and/or Negative Balances in Student's Accounts. When a student account reaches a low or negative balance, communication shall be made directly to the parent or legal guardian, and the unpaid meal debt policy will be referenced. School Nutrition Services will not utilize wristbands or hand stamps. No communication is allowed directly with students.

D. Debt Resolution. School Nutrition Services Revenue may not be used to subsidize unpaid meal debt.

Adopted: 1/22/19

Legal Refs: [Code of Federal Regulations Part 200 Section 143 of Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act, 2010](#), Code of Virginia §[22.1-79.7](#)