

School Nutrition Management Meal Charge Policy

The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs are integral in ensuring that students have access to nutritious meals to support their academic success. It is also imperative to protect the financial stability of the school nutrition program.

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

Meal Accessibility

1.
 - A. Students who qualify for free meals will not be denied a reimbursable meal even if they have accrued a negative balance on their cafeteria account.
 - B. 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 SFA will not use the money to repay a negative balance or other unpaid meal charge debt.
 - C. Students without funds to pay for a full price or reduced-price or meal are allowed to charge Breakfast and Lunch.
 - D. Students are allowed to charge up to a week's worth of meals before receiving notice of payment due for meal charges.
 - E. Students who charge a meal will receive a reimbursable meal.
 - F. Students with charges will be allowed to choose a reimbursable meal with the minimum choice options. Three items for breakfast and three items for lunch. They may not choose the maximum items allowed.
 - G. Students with a negative balance may not purchase á la carte items or extra items.
 - H. The denial of a school meal may not be used as a disciplinary action.

Communicating the Policy

2.
 - A. The written meal charge policy will be communicated to the household by posting on the Waynesboro Public Schools website, included in the student information packet distributed at the beginning of the school year, provided to all transfer students at registration during the school year, and also attached to the Meal Benefits Application.
 - B. The written meal charge policy will be communicated to all division staff prior to the first day of school each year.
 - C. Child Nutrition Program staff will receive training on the meal charge policy, with record of the training (s) maintained in the Central Office School Nutrition Department.
 - D. 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

3. A. The student's household will be notified when a student's cafeteria account falls below \$0.00.
- B. The SFA will notify households of negative balances as follows:
 - The school cafeteria manager will send charge notices home with the students once a week.
 - The second week, the cafeteria manager will contact the parents/guardians via phone call or e-mail.
 - After three weeks with no response, the school principal or designee will contact, through letter, e-mail or phone call, the parents/guardians regarding the charges. Letters will be generated by the cafeteria manager and given to the school principal or designee.

Phone calls and e-mails will be made to the contact numbers or addresses on file. Letters will be sent via US mail to the address on file.
- C. Notifications to households will include the amount of unpaid meal charges, expected payment dates, the consequences of non-payment and where to go for questions or assistance.
- D. The consequences of non-payment will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- E. The persons responsible for managing unpaid meal charges are:
 - a. SNP school-based staff will collect payment for meals at the POS. They will send charge notices and letters on a weekly basis.
 - b. SNP principal or designee will contact households after three weeks of contact by the SNP school cafeteria manager.
 - c. The Coordinator of School Nutrition will contact households when the debt has been deemed delinquent debt for more than a semester or has been deemed bad debt.
- F. Families may set up a payment plan with the cafeteria manager to repay meal charges.

Delinquent debt is allowable in the School Nutrition Program and may be carried over to one successive school year.

Bad debt is defined as "delinquent debt that is deemed uncollectible at the end of the school year." Bad debt is unallowable in the SNP and cannot be carried over to the next school year. Funds resulting from bad debt cannot be recovered using SNP funds and must be offset by non-federal sources.

5. At the end of the school year, the SNP Coordinator and the Finance Director will evaluate all delinquent debt for conversion to bad debt. Bad debt will be restored to the SNP from the general operating fund prior to the end of the same fiscal year.

Assistance to Households

Households with questions or needing assistance may contact the school office where their student attends or the School Nutrition Program office at: 301 Pine Avenue, Waynesboro, VA 22980. (540) 946-4600.

Adopted: November 8, 1994

Revised: May 10, 2012, June 13, 2017

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