

## WYTHE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS MEAL CHARGE POLICY

### **Policy:**

Policy for Students with Insufficient Funds for School Meals and Delinquent Accounts in the School Nutrition Program (aka Meal Charge Policy OR Unpaid Meal Charge Policy).

### **Regulations:**

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

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 school nutrition program.

The intent of this policy 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.

Children may receive breakfast and lunch at no cost to them if they are categorically eligible for free meals or if they qualify for free meals based on Federal poverty guidelines. Children who do not qualify for free meals may purchase meals at a subsidized cost, at either the reduced price or paid rate.

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1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Students without funds to pay for a reduced-price or full price meal are allowed to charge Breakfast and Lunch.
5. Students are allowed to charge reimbursable meals up to \$20.00.
6. Students who charge a meal will receive a reimbursable meal.
7. No a la carte or snack items will be allowed to be charged to their cafeteria account.

### **Communicating the Policy**

1. The written meal charge policy will be communicated to the household by posting on the Wythe County Public Schools' website, including it in the Meal Benefits Application Packet distributed at open house prior to the first day of school and to all transfer students during the school year.
2. The written meal charge policy will be communicated to all division staff prior to the first day of school.
3. School Nutrition Program staff will receive training on meal charge policy and record of training will be maintained as part of the professional development portfolio.
4. Documentation of the communication and training plan will be maintained for the Federal Program Administrative Review.
5. At any time, parents can access student account balances via PowerSchool or MySchoolBucks.

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

1. The student's parent/guardian will be notified when a student's cafeteria account has a negative balance.
2. The school office will notify parent/guardian of low or negative balances via either School Messenger alerts, letters sent home with student, and/or telephone calls.
3. Notifications to parent/guardian will include the amount of unpaid meal charges, expected payment dates, and where to go for questions or assistance.
4. The consequences of non-payment will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
5. The persons responsible for managing unpaid meal charges are:
  - a. SNP school-based staff will collect payment for meals at the POS.
  - b. SNP school-based staff will notify the office of negative balances and the office will contact parent/guardian.

### **Delinquent Debt/Bad Debt**

The student's household will be notified within five (5) days of the charge for repayment. Repayment is expected upon receipt of notice.

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.

1. At the end of the school year, the SNP school-based staff will notify the school office of all delinquent debt. The school will pay the total amount of delinquent debt to the SNP by the last day of school.
2. Efforts to recover the delinquent debt will be handled by each school office.

### **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: (276) 228-5411, Wythe County Public Schools, Attn: School Nutrition Coordinator, 1570 West Reservoir Street, Wytheville, VA 24382.

### **Collection procedures for Delinquent and Bad Debt- Adverse Action**

1. At the end of the school year when a household has reached a threshold of \$10.00, collection procedures will be initiated.
2. Household will receive a Notification/Notice of Adverse Action stating collection procedures have begun.
3. If payment is not received, responsible party will continue to be notified of delinquent charges for a period not to exceed twenty days or June 30<sup>th</sup>, whichever comes first.
4. If notification attempts fail, the unresolved charges may be turned over to a collection agency.

Adopted: June 8, 2017

Revised October 11, 2018

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Legal Refs: U.S. Department of Agriculture, SP 46-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies, July 8, 2016.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, SP 47-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments, July 8, 2016.

Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-207.4.

Virginia Board of Education, A Resolution to Establish and Define Exemptions for School-Sponsored Fundraisers Pending Incorporation in the Proposed Regulations Governing Nutritional Guidelines for Competitive Foods Available for Sale in the Public Schools (Nov. 19, 2015).

Cross Refs:	EFB	Free and Reduced Price Food Services
	IGAE/IGAF	Health Education/Physical Education
	JHCF	Student Wellness
	JL	Fund Raising and Solicitation
	KQ	Commercial, Promotional and Corporate Sponsorships and Partnerships