

CHARGING SCHOOL MEALS

The Board of Education recognizes that on occasion, students may not have enough funds for a meal. To ensure that students do not go hungry, but also to promote responsible student behavior and minimize the fiscal burden to the District, the Board will allow students who do not have enough funds to “charge” the cost of meals to be paid back at a later date subject to the terms in this policy.

A student may charge up to ten reimbursable meals. The District may allow additional reimbursable meals to be charged when extenuating circumstances exist. Extra items such as à la carte items and snacks may not be charged.

Charged meals must be counted and claimed for reimbursement on the day that the student charged (received) the meal, not the day that the charge is paid back. When charges are paid, the monies are not to be considered “à la carte” transactions, as a section on the daily cash report or deposit summary reads “charges paid.”

When a student’s account reflects three outstanding meal charges, the District’s Food Service Manager will notify the parents/guardians of the outstanding balance, the process to refill the account, and the District’s policy on charging school meals. When a student’s account reflects five outstanding meal charges, a building administrator or designee will contact the parents/guardians. Notification may continue regularly until the account is replenished. Parents/guardians must repay all unpaid charges remaining at the end of the year or before their child leaves the District, whichever occurs first.

No student with unpaid charges will be prohibited from purchasing food if they have money on a particular day.

The District shall discretely notify parents/guardians of students with regular negative balances of the application process for free and/or reduced price meals. If a parent/guardian regularly fails to provide meal money and does not qualify for free or reduced price meals, the District may take other actions as appropriate, including notifying the local department of social services if neglect is suspected.

A student who has abused this policy can be refused a meal. Such a refusal is not considered to be a violation of any state or federal laws concerning school food programs. Before denying any student a meal, the District will carefully consider the negative consequences of such an action. Refusing students in grades up to and including fourth grade and/or students with disabilities is prohibited by the Board. If a student is suspected of abusing this policy, written notice will be provided to the parent/guardian that if he/she continues to abuse this policy, the privilege of charging meals will be refused.

The District will notify all parents/guardians of this policy in writing on an annual basis at the start of the school year and when families transfer during the year. The policy shall also be

published in appropriate school and District publications. All staff involved in implementing and enforcing this policy shall also be notified of these requirements and their responsibilities.

Unpaid Meal Charges and Debt Collection

Unpaid meal charges are a financial burden to the District and taxpayers and can negatively affect the school program. Unpaid meal charges shall be considered “delinquent” as per the District’s accounting practices. The District shall attempt to recover unpaid meal charges before the end of the school year, but may continue efforts into the next school year. The District shall notify parents/guardians of unpaid meal charges at regular intervals, and may engage in collection activities. The District shall offer repayment plans, and may take other actions that do not result in harm or shame to the child, until unpaid charges are paid.

Account Balances

Remaining funds will be carried over to the next school year. When students leave the District or graduate, the District will attempt to contact the parent/guardian to return remaining funds. Parents/guardians may request that funds be transferred to other students (e.g., siblings, unpaid accounts). All transfer requests must be in writing. Unclaimed funds remaining after three months shall be absorbed by the school meal account.

Staff

Staff members are allowed to purchase food from the District’s food services. However, all purchases must be paid for at the point of sale. Staff members are not allowed to charge meals to be repaid later.

Cross-ref: 8520, Free and Reduced Price Food Services

Ref: 42 USC § 1779 (Child Nutrition Act of 1966)
 42 USC § 1758(f)(1); § 1766(a) (National School Lunch Act)
 2 CFR § 200.426 (accounting for debt in federal programs)
 7 CFR §§ 210.9 210.12; 210.19; 220.13; 245.5 (accounting in federal school meal programs)
 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (Public Law 111-296), § 143
 USDA Report to Congress, *Review of Local Policies on Meal Charges and Provision of Alternate Meals*, June 2016, www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/unpaidmealcharges-report.pdf
Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies, USDA FNS Memo SP 46-2016 (07/08/16), www.fns.usda.gov/unpaid-meal-charges-local-meal-charge-policies
Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q&A, USDA FNS Memo SP 57-2016 (09/16/16), <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/SP57-2016os.pdf>

Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q&A, USDA FNS Memo SP 23-2017 (03/23/17), <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/SP23-2017os.pdf>

Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments, USDA FNS Memo SP 47-2016 (07/08/16), www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/SP47-2016os.pdf

Overcoming the Unpaid Meal Challenge - Proven Strategies from Our Nation's Schools, USDA FNS Guidance Document (May 2017), <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/SP29-2017a1.pdf>

Student Meal Charge Policy, NYSED Guidance Memo, (5/30/17), <http://www.cn.nysed.gov/content/student-meal-charge-policy>

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