

Surry 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.

Guidelines

- The first day of school in September of each year, parents should send a lunch or lunch money with their child unless they are free or reduced from the year before. They will have 30 days from the time school starts to reapply for free or reduced meals. If a student is paid and the parent is sending in an application, the parent is still responsible for debt incurred on the account until the application is processed.
- A free and reduced application must be turned in each school year. After the first 30 days, the students who qualified the year before will go to paid. If an application qualifies the student for free, the charged meals will still be the responsibility of the parent.
- 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.
- 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.
- Students without funds to pay for a reduced-price or full price meal are allowed to charge Breakfast and Lunch.
- Students are allowed to charge meals up to \$5.00.
- Students are not allowed to charge snacks or a la carte items.
- Students who charge a meal will receive a reimbursable meal.
- Students who reach the charge limit of \$5.00 will be offered two alternative meals. After two alternative meals have been served, no meal will be offered until the account balance is brought back below the \$5.00 charge limit.
- An alternate breakfast and lunch can only be allowed two times. An alternate meal will consist of for breakfast toast, fruit and milk. An alternate meal will consist of for lunch cold cheese sandwich, veggie, fruit and milk.

- No charging will be allowed after the second week of May.
 - Parents/guardians will be sent a written request for “Payment in Full”
 - All charges must be paid before the last day of school each year.

Communicating the Policy

- The written meal charge policy will be communicated to the household by posting on the Surry County Public Schools division website.
- Included in the student information packet distributed on the first day of school and to all transfer students during the school year.
- Attached to the Meal Benefits Application.
- The written meal charge policy will be communicated to all division staff prior to the first day of school.
- Child Nutrition Program staff will receive training on meal charge policy and record of 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 \$0.00
- The SFA will notify households of low or negative balances by sending letters home to parents that have been generated by the Meals Plus POS system.
- Notifications to households will include the amount of unpaid meal charges, expected payment dates and where to go for questions or assistance.
- If debt is not paid within 45 days of notice being given, it is considered bad debt for purposes of federal law concerning unpaid meal charges.
- The persons responsible for managing unpaid meal charges are:
 - a. SNP school-based staff will collect payment for meals at the POS.
 - b. SNP central office will contact households for nonpayment.

Liquidation of Bad Debt

Delinquent debt is allowable in the School nutrition program and may be carried over to each 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.

- At the end of the school year, the SNP Director 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 fund prior to the end of the same fiscal year.
- Efforts to collect delinquent and/or bad debt will be handled by the school Food Services Department.
 - a) Send First and Second Letters when a negative balance is reached
 - b) Phone calls when the \$5.00 charge limit is reached

- **Before a student can withdraw from the school system, all money owed shall be paid.**
- **By the end of the school year all debt will be collected prior to graduation.**
- **If payment is not received, collection proceedings will occur.**

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: 45 School Street, P. O. Box 317, Surry, VA 23883 / (757) 294-5235.

Collection procedures for Delinquent and Bad Debt- Adverse Action

When a household has reached threshold of \$5.00, collection procedures will be initiated by the Schools Food Services Department.