

Cumberland County Schools Meal Charge Administrative Procedure

Effective Date: July 1, 2017

As provided in SP 46-2016, all school food authorities (SFAs) operating the federal school meal programs (National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program) must have a written and clearly communicated meal charge administrative procedure in place no later than July 1, 2017. All SFAs must have an administrative procedure in place for children participating at the reduced price or paid meal rate who either do not have money in their account or in hand to cover the cost of the meal at the time of service. SFAs are required to communicate that administrative procedure to families and school and/or district-level staff members as appropriate. SFAs should ensure the administrative procedure is communicated on an annual basis.

Families will have access to the meal charge administrative procedure via packets that are given to each student at the start of each school year. Families of transfer students (during the year) will receive a written copy of the district-wide charge administrative procedure with the enrollment packet.

Local Charge Administrative Procedure – Student Fees & Fines (Policy Reference: 6.709)

Cumberland County School Nutrition believes in the importance of providing healthy nutritious meals for our students. Just as with any services, there is an expense involved with every meal that we provide. Our county has a very high population of free and reduced students and our free and reduced onboarding process functions extremely well.

The guidelines set forth in this procedure have been developed to protect and nurture the children of our school system. While it would be best if all meals for all students were paid in full, that is simply not possible, although we are moving towards that goal. We must set standards and procedures to address high student cafeteria charges.

General

Students who are unable to pay for their meals at the time of the meal service are allowed to charge:

- ✓ Breakfast
- ✓ Lunch

Students charging breakfast and/or lunch will receive reimbursable meals. A la cart items are never allowed to be charged.

Charge Limits and Household Notification

All students will be given a verbal reminder regarding low balances. Students will also be given a verbal reminder of a negative balance after the first meal by the cashier (a la cart items will not be charged after this warning). Additionally, negative balance notices will be sent out by the Skyward School Messenger Program via phone and email.

All students will be given a written warning after the negative balance reaches \$10.00. Students will not be permitted to purchase concessions during fundraising events until the cafeteria balance is settled. Pre-printed reminders will be available to cashiers and will be given to the child through the homeroom teacher.

If the negative balance reaches \$20.00, the student's teacher will be informed that the next meal will be an alternate basic nutritional meal that will be available with the cashier. So as to not embarrass the child, the meal will be provided through the normal food line. The teacher or assistant will need to accompany the child through the line to ensure the child understands the process. The parent will be contacted by the district's Family Resource Representative and assistance will be provided as needed up to and including education on the Free and Reduced School Lunch Forms and process. As an added benefit, the Community Table cart is available to all students. The café manager will provide a list daily to the Principal of all balances over \$20.00. The principal will then provide the name to the student's teacher and Family Resource Representative.

The negative balance for full pay students should never rise above \$20.00. The negative charges will follow a student if they transfer schools. Any remaining balance will be charged to the school. The only instance that negative balances shall rise above \$20.00 is a student on reduced fees (basic nutritional meals cannot be given to these students). If the negative balance reaches \$50.00, legal counsel will send a letter requesting payment. The School Nutrition District Supervisor will provide the Director of Schools a list of all accounts that exceed \$50.00 on the 15th and 30th of each month. The letters will be sent semi-monthly upon receiving the list of accounts on the 15th and 30th of each month by the DOS Office.

If the negative balance reaches \$100.00, the School Nutrition District Supervisor will provide the list to the Director of Schools, and the Department of Children's Services will be notified and the account will be sent to collections.

Alternate meals

The district only gives complete nutritional meals as an alternate meal.

The alternate meal will include the following:

- Breakfast: Cereal, Toast, Juice, and Milk (no condiments)
- Lunch: Sandwich or PB&J Pocket, Canned Fruit, Vegetable, and Milk (no condiments)

Delinquent Debt

Delinquent debt is defined as overdue unpaid meal charges that are considered collectable, with efforts being made to collect them. The debt may remain on the accounting documents until it is either collected or determined to be uncollectable. The debt may be carried over at the end of the school year (beyond June 30).

Before the SFA requests payment of outstanding debt, the household's debt will be delinquent until it is deemed by the Director of Schools that it be classified as bad debt. Collection attempts will continue as long as debt is deemed delinquent as a joint effort of the School Cafeteria Manager, the School Office Administrative Staff, the Cumberland County School Nutrition Office, and the Director of Schools' Office.

Repayment plans

Each household may request a repayment plan that will include payment levels and due dates appropriate to a household's particular circumstances. Please contact Kathy Hamby at khamby@ccschools.k12tn.net or 931-484-6722 for establishing a repayment plan.

Bad Debt

Bad debt is determined to be uncollectable when further collection efforts for delinquent debt are deemed useless or too costly. Delinquent debt will be considered as bad debt as deemed by the Director of Schools.

- Bad debts (debts which have been determined to be uncollectable), including losses (whether actual or estimated) arising from uncollectable accounts and other claims, are unallowable. Related collection costs, and related legal costs, arising from such debts after they have been determined to be uncollectable are also unallowable (section 200.426 of subpart E).
- Bad debt must be written off as an operating loss as deemed by the Director of Schools; the nonprofit school food service account (NSFSA) resources may not be used to cover the costs related to the bad debt. These funds may come from the school district's general fund, school or community organizations, or any other non-federal sources.
- Once delinquent meal charges are converted to bad debt, records relating to those charges must be maintained in accordance with record retention requirements in 7 CFR 210.9(b)(17) and 7 CFR 210.15(b).

Additional Resources

Families may find assistance with applying for free or reduced price schools meals by contacting Kathy Hamby, School Nutrition District Supervisor at khamby@ccschools.k12tn.net or 931-484-6722.

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;*
- 2) *fax: (202) 690-7442; or*
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