SUPPORT SERVICES

Payment for Charged Food Purchases

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, as well as individual school budgets.

The intent of this regulation is to establish a Divisionwide process to handle situations when students 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.

I. Procedures for Charging Meals

A. Students who reach the cashier in the cafeteria without money for their meals shall be allowed charging privileges. Students are only allowed to charge reimbursable meals. They are not permitted to charge snack items, additional servings, or second meals. All charged meals shall be provided by the cafeteria and recorded in the computerized point of sale (POS) system.

B. All students shall receive the same level of service regardless of meal balance. No student shall be singled out, separated from peers, or denied access to meals. All communication regarding negative balances shall be sent directly to the parent/guardian.

II. Communication of Charge Policy to School Staff and Parents/Guardians

A. The PWCS policy for charging meals shall be posted on the Office of School Food and Nutrition Services (SFNS) website in the required languages and shall be included in the “Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application Packet” that is distributed to all households at the beginning of the school year and to the households of all students entering PWCS after that point.

B. The charge policy and regulation shall be reviewed with all SFNS managers and cashiers at in-services at the beginning of each school year.

C. The charge policy and regulation shall be reviewed with school principals at Level meetings at the beginning of each school year.

III. Notifying the Household of Low or Negative Balance in Student Food Service Accounts

A. Every Friday, food service managers shall provide to the school principal a negative balance list of charges over $10.00.

B. Parents/guardians shall be encouraged to utilize www.MySchoolBucks.com, a website service available to parents/guardians to manage their student’s food service accounts.
account. Parents/guardians can log into the site to check their child’s lunch account balance, meal history, and make payments on their account with a credit card. They can also sign up for email notification when their student’s account balance is low.

C. On Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of each week, SFNS shall send out automated telephone calls, text messages, and emails (using School Messenger) to any household with students who have a negative balance. These contacts shall be ongoing until the debt is paid.

D. Local school personnel including the food service manager, as well as the school principal and/or designees, shall use personal telephone calls to collect the charges owed.

E. At the end of each month, food service managers shall print notices for parents/guardians for each student with a negative balance of $20.00 or more to be mailed to the households via U.S. Postal Service. Any letters returned for change of address shall be given to the school office, to be researched, corrected, and mailed.

F. SFNS shall send a certified collection letter to the parent/guardian of each student who reaches a negative balance of $50.00. Certification receipts and PDF’s of the letters sent shall be kept for documentation.

G. With each contact, school staff shall encourage households to complete an application for meal assistance.

IV. Consequences to Households for Failure to Pay Charge Debt

A. Schools shall have the option of sending households owing $25.00 or more at year-end to collection via the vendor on contract. All other collection efforts on this debt shall stop at that point.

B. Students shall not be denied access to school sponsored or related activities based on meal balances.

VII. Year-End Reimbursement for Unpaid Debt

At year-end, school principals shall be billed for unpaid balances on student accounts. Schools may use PTA/PTO donations, appropriate charitable donations within the Student Activity Funds, or appropriated funds to pay for these uncollected meal charges.

The Associate Superintendent for Support Services (or designee) and the Level Associate Superintendents are responsible for implementing and monitoring this regulation.

This regulation and related policy shall be reviewed at least every five years and revised as needed.