

HEBRON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Business and Non-Instructional Operations

3009

Food Service

Charging Policy

The school nutrition program is an extension of the school's educational programs and it is the District's vision to have a partnership among students, staff, school family and the community in offering access to and providing nutritious meals, which are attractively presented at an affordable price.

The goal of the food service program is to provide students with nutritious and healthy foods through the District's food services program that will enhance learning. The school nutrition program is an essential part of the education system and by providing good-tasting, nutritious meals in pleasant surroundings; we are helping to teach students the value of good nutrition.

The Board of Education (Board) has an agreement with the Connecticut State Department of Education to participate in one or more school Child Nutrition Programs and accepts full responsibility for adhering to the federal and state guidelines and regulations pertaining to these school Child Nutrition Programs. The Board also accepts full responsibility for providing free or reduced price meals to eligible elementary and secondary students enrolled in the District's schools. Applicants for such meals are responsible to pay for meals until the application for the free or reduced price meals is completed and approved. All applications for free and reduced price lunch and any related information will be considered strictly confidential and not to be shared outside of the District's food services program. Meals are planned to meet the specified nutrient standards outlined by the United States Department of Agriculture for children based on their age or grade group.

Although not required by law, because of the District's participation in the Child Nutrition Programs, the Board approves the establishment of a system to allow a student to charge a meal.

The Board realizes that funds from the non-profit school food service account, according to federal regulations, cannot be used to cover the cost of charged meals that have not been paid.

Moreover, federal funds are intended to subsidize the meals of children and may not be used to subsidize meals for adults (teachers, staff and visitors). Adults are not allowed to charge meals and shall pay for such meals at the time of service or through pre-paid accounts.

In order to sustain the District's food services program, the District cannot permit the excessive charging of student meals. Therefore, the handling of charged meals must be consistent with the following:

- a. All charges must be paid in 10 days;
- b. Students may not charge more than 5 reimbursable meals;
- d. Parents will be notified and asked for prompt payment after 3 charges;
- e. If a pattern of charging continues, attempts will be made to discuss the issue with the parents/guardians and encourage them to complete a free and reduced meal application;

- f. Money owed because of unpaid meal charges shall be considered "delinquent debt," as defined, as long as it is considered collectable and reasonable efforts are being made to collect it. Such debt must be paid by June 30, effective with the school year in which the delinquent debt incurred.
- g. After reasonable attempts are made to collect the delinquent debt, and it is determined that further collection efforts of the district are useless or too costly, debt collection shall be moved to a third party collection agency. Debt collections for outstanding balances will occur in January and July.
- h. The cost of providing this alternate meal cannot be incurred by the school food service account and the charge for this alternate meal will be in accordance with federal and state reimbursement rates. More specifically, it will be the district's current lunch price less the reimbursement rate.

Any parent/guardian who anticipates a problem with paying for meals is encouraged to contact the School Principal or Food Services Director. The Board encourages all families who may have a child eligible for free or reduced price lunch to apply.

Dissemination of Policy

This policy shall be provided in writing to all households at the start of each school year and to households transferring to the school or school district during the school year.

This policy shall be included in student/parent handbooks and placed on the District's website, and published at the beginning of each school year at the time information is distributed regarding free and reduced price meals and again to the household the first time the policy is applied to a specific child.

This policy shall be provided to all school staff and/or school food authority staff responsible for its enforcement. In addition, school social workers, nurses, the homeless liaison, and other staff members assisting children in need or who may be contacted by families with unpaid meal charges also should be informed of this policy.

The District's school food authority shall maintain, as required, documentation of the methods used to communicate this policy to households and school or school food authority-level staff responsible for policy enforcement.

Definitions

"**Alternate Meals**" are not clearly defined in federal and state regulations. The use of alternate meals refers to any meal served to a student that is different from the day's advertised reimbursable meal. Alternate meals are most often provided to those students who have forgotten their meal payment(s) or medium of exchange.

"**Delinquent Debt**" are unpaid meal charges, like any other money owed to the nonprofit school food service account when payment is overdue, as defined by state or local policies.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

[10-215](#) Lunches, breakfasts and other feeding programs for public school children and employees.

[10-215a](#) Nonpublic school and nonprofit agency participation in feeding programs.

[10-215b](#) Duties of State Board of Education re feeding programs.

State Board of Education Regulations

State of Connecticut, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education
Operational Memorandum No. 4-17, "Guidance on Unpaid Meal Charges and
Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments," Nov. 2, 2016

Operational Memorandum #19-10, State of Connecticut, Bureau of Health/Nutrition,
Family Services and Adult Education "Unallowable Charges to No-profit School Food
Service Accounts and the Serving of Meals to No-paying Full and Reduced Price
Students"

National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program; Competitive Foods. (7
CFR Parts 210 and 220, Federal Register, Vol 45 No. 20, Tuesday, January 29, 1980,
pp 6758-6772

USDA Guidance:

- SP 46-2016, "Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies"
- SP 47-2016, "Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payment"
- SP 57-2016 "Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q and A"
- SP 58-2016 "2016 Edition: Overcoming the Unpaid Meal Challenge: Proven Strategies from Our Nation's Schools"

Policy adopted: July 12, 2018