

Branford Public Schools

Administrative Regulation – School Breakfast and Lunch Program Debt Collections

Reference Policy: 3542.43 Charging Policy

Purpose: To provide a framework for collection of student's unpaid meal charges

Overview: Effective July 1, 2017, school districts participating in the National School Lunch Program must supplement their food Charging Policy with a debt collection protocol. School lunch program funds may not be used to finance delinquent balances.

- Students with a negative meals balance will not be allowed to participate in extracurricular activities nor will academic transcripts be provided until the balance has been paid. Extracurricular activities are defined as those that are not essential to the instructional day and shall include proms and dances, clubs, athletics, and promotion/graduation ceremonies.
- "Meals" as referenced in the charging limit shall be defined as lunch at the applicable school level for the student.
- "Alternate Meals" per policy shall be provided during lunch service only.
- Charges for Alternative Meals will continue to accrue to the student's account after the charging limit has been reached.
- A student with sufficient cash to pay for a full price or, if eligible, reduced-price lunch will be served the regular lunch of the day instead of an Alternate Meal, regardless of negative account status.
- As is grade and age appropriate, cashiers will notify students of a low balance to encourage timely replenishment of the account.
- School Foodservice staff shall promptly notify the designated building administrator when a student's charging limit has been reached and shall provide the building administrator with a list of all negative balances on a regular basis to allow notification to parents/guardians in conjunction with academic progress reports or to otherwise assist in enforcement of this regulation.
- The building administrator will contact the family and attempt to resolve the negative balance. If deemed appropriate, the opportunity to apply for Free or Reduced-price meals shall be offered again.

Bad Debt Processing

1. At the end of each school year, the amount of all negative balances owed to the school foodservice program shall be reimbursed with non-program funds.
2. The district will cause individual negative balance information to be retained and diligent efforts will be made to collect those balances. Negative balance consequences such as extracurricular activities restrictions and transcript holds will remain in place until the outstanding balance has been paid.
3. On at least an annual basis, the Chief Administrative Officer or his/her designee will determine any accounts that are uncollectible, which will be declared bad debt and written off.

Refunds

- Parents/Guardians of a student disenrolling from the district with a meals credit balance of less than \$15 shall be refunded the balance upon request.
- Any student disenrolling from the district with a meals credit balance of \$15 or more shall be refunded his/her balance. Reasonable attempts will be made to contact families that have no forwarding address.
- Any student eligible for Free or Reduced-price meals at the time of disenrollment shall be refunded a credit balance of any amount.

Effective date: July 1, 2017