

## **Business/Non-Instructional Operations**

### **Food Service**

#### **Charging Policy**

The Cromwell Public School District recognizes the important link between proper nutrition and academic success. The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent district procedure for charging meals when students do not have money to pay, preventing meal charges, and ensuring eligible children are certified for free and reduced-price school meals.

#### **Charging Meals**

Schools can offer students unable to pay a regular menu meal or a lower-cost alternate meal that meets nutrition standards, but does not overtly identify children, **OR**

Schools can allow students to charge reimbursable meals up to a certain number of meals or dollar amount and then provide an alternate meal after that.

#### **Preventing Meal Charges**

To ensure that all eligible families are certified for free and reduced-price school meals, the school nutrition department shall:

- ✓ provide all households with school meal applications prior to the start of the school year and/or include instructions for completing online school meal applications;
- ✓ provide school meal applications in the primary language of the parent or guardian and provide assistance with completing an application for any household that requests assistance;
- ✓ promptly utilize data provided by the state or other school district officials to certify eligible children without an application; and
- ✓ assure that any child for which the school district is not able to obtain a completed school meal application, but becomes aware of their eligibility for free or reduced-price school meals shall be certified based on an application submitted by the appropriate school official, as permitted by USDA guidance.

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.

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Legal Reference: (continued)

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: October 9, 2018

**CROMWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
Cromwell, Connecticut

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In order to sustain the Food Service Program in the Cromwell Public Schools, the Board requires that each family pay in advance for each student's school meals.

#### ***Payments:***

To facilitate payment in advance for school meals, the Board has established a payment program whereby parents or guardians may pay for meals in advance either by cash or check or through [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com) program. For more information about payment methods or if you have a question, please contact the Food Service Bookkeeper at 860-632-4840.

If a parent or guardian chooses to send in one payment that is to be divided between sibling accounts, it must specify how the funds are to be distributed amongst the student accounts. Funds may not be transferred between sibling accounts unless written permission is received from the parent or guardian.

#### ***Applications for Free and Reduced Price Lunch:***

If at any time, a parent or guardian anticipates a problem with paying for meals, he/she should contact the Food Service Manager as soon as possible for assistance. Parents and guardians are encouraged to apply free and reduced price meals for their children. In order to qualify, families must meet eligibility criteria. Applications can be filed at any time during the summer or school year and new applications may be filed if there is a change in household income or in the number of household members. Applicants are responsible to pay for meals until the application for free and reduced price lunch is completed and approved.

All applications for free and reduced price lunch and any related information will be considered strictly confidential and will not be shared outside the Food Services Program.

#### ***Low or Negative Account Balances:***

When a student has a negative account balance, no charging of snack items will be allowed. No child shall be denied a school meal due to lack of pre-payment; however, the process set forth below shall be followed whenever a child does not have sufficient funds in his or her school meal account.

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#### ***Low or Negative Account Balances:*** (continued)

To ensure that households are aware of negative account balances and the potential to accrue meal debt, the café manager will:

- ✓ send out low balance notices prior to students needing to charge meals;
- ✓ send an email once balance reaches -\$10; and
- ✓ use automated email alerts to notify parents of negative balances weekly.