

## **LUNCH CHARGING**

A requirement of the USDA National School Lunch Program (NSLP) requires that sponsors of school Child Nutrition Programs maintain a policy that addresses the charging of meals and a child's inability to pay. Bad debt (uncollectable accounts) and collection are unallowable costs under NSLP, as are alternative, "emergency" lunches that do not conform to the menu item requirements of the program. It is the intent of the Board that school lunch payment issues are handled in a manner that maintains student dignity and supports its objective of operating the Killingly Public School Lunch Program as a self-supporting venture.

If a student does not have his/her lunch money, the district will permit charging of his/her lunch meal for a maximum of twenty-five dollars. Upon attaining a negative balance in a school lunch account, the student's family will be contacted by the Food Services Department or their designee.

A student lunch debt is deemed to be uncollectable when the student graduates or otherwise is disenrolled from the district. Upon request, students who exit the district with a credit balance on their account will be issued a reimbursement. Such reimbursement shall be automatic if the credit equals or exceeds ten dollars.

At the end of each school year, the manager of the Killingly Public School Lunch Program shall submit to the business office a detailed list of outstanding student lunch debt and the amount of credit balances considered abandoned by students who are no longer enrolled in the district.

### **Delinquent Debt and Bad Debt**

The District's effort to recover from households money owed due to the charging of meals must not have a negative impact on the children involved and shall focus primarily on the adults in the household responsible for providing funds for meal purchases. The school food authority is encouraged to consider whether the benefits of potential collections outweigh the costs which would be incurred to achieve those collections.

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 2017-2018 school year.

After reasonable attempts are made to collect the delinquent debt, and it is determined that further collection efforts are useless or too costly, the debt must be reclassified as "bad debt." Such debt will be written off as an operating loss not to be absorbed by the nonprofit school food service account, but must be restored using non-federal funds.

### **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 district during the school year.

This policy shall be included in student/parent handbooks, on online portals that households use to access student accounts, placed on the District's website, on the website of each school, 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.

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### Dissemination of Policy (continued)

This policy shall be included in student/parent handbooks, on online portals that households use to access student accounts, placed on the District's website, on the website of each school, 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 food service 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.

(cf. 3542 - Food Service)

(cf. 3542.31 - Free or Reduced Price Lunch Program)

### 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 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"

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**KILLINGLY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
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