

BUSINESS

Administrative Regulation - Food Services Department – Meal Charging Procedures

The Food Services Department [program] will make accommodations for students who do not have money in their meal account or have forgotten their money at time of service by providing a full reimbursable meal (breakfast and/or lunch) that meets the USDA national school breakfast/lunch program requirements. Unpaid account balances impose financial burden on the Food Services Department and in return on the school district. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) regulations places this liability on the district at the end of each fiscal year and requires the School Food Service Authorities (SFA's) be made whole by the district for any outstanding debt remaining at the end of each school year. To minimize the impact of outstanding debt on the district due to meal charges, the following procedures will be implemented:

Payment Options

Individual student meal accounts shall be established by the program. A student's account and meal account balance remains with the student until the student is no longer enrolled.

All families are offered the opportunity and encouraged to apply for the free or reduced meal price benefit based on their financial status.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to pre-pay for their meals by creating an account on www.myschoolaccount.com or by sending cash or check made payable to the Coventry-Andover School Food Service to the Food Service Department or the school cafeteria, or students may pay at the time of service.

If a student comes to lunch with a negative balance on their account and no money the program will still provide a meal of the student's choice and inform them they are borrowing money that day (charging) to pay for the meal.

If a student has money to purchase a reduced price or paid meal at the time of the meal service, the child must be provided a meal. SFA's may not use the money to repay previously unpaid charges if the child intended to use the money to purchase that day's meal.

Procedures on Charging Meals

Parents will be notified that any school meal debt accrued prior to the schools determination that the student(s) is eligible for free or reduced lunch remains the parent's responsibility. Additionally, parents are responsible for charges that place the student in a negative status.

No charges are allowed for extras (second meals) or a la carte foods on any negative balance accounts or accounts with a zero balance.

Gifts and Donations

The Coventry Board of Education may accept gifts, donations, or grants from any public or private source for the purpose of paying off any unpaid charges for school meals.

Any gifts, donations, or grants received for this purpose will be deposited in to the Student Activity Fund, Food Service - Student Debt account and be used for the exclusive purpose of paying outstanding student debt at the end of each school year.

Students Receiving Free/Reduced Price Meal Benefits

Students who are eligible to receive free/reduced meals may receive one complete breakfast and one complete lunch per day. In order to receive the free/reduced meal, students must take all required meal components that make up a nutritional meal in accordance with the NSLP and SBP requirements. Extra meals or a la carte items can only be purchased if the student has funds on his or her account or presents payment at the point of sale. If the student does not have adequate funds to purchase their meal at the point of purchase, their account will be charged for the cost of that meal. The student's parents or guardians may be notified by email, phone call or www.myschoolaccount.com of low or negative balances. Families with students who are eligible for reduced price meals who are struggling to make payments are encouraged to contact the Director of Food Services at 860-742-4535.

Balances Owed

Parents/guardians are encouraged to set up the online low balance alert on their child's myschoolaccount. Students who do not have a positive balance or forget to bring money for the day will be charged according to student's status.

Any family that falls into a negative balance will receive written notification to encourage them to apply for free or reduced meal benefits.

The School Food Service Director will maintain records of the efforts made to collect unpaid meal charges and if applicable, financial documentation showing when the unpaid meal balance has become an operating loss.

Student Fees, Fines, Charges or Refunds

Any Bank fees incurred will be added to outstanding meal debt. This will apply to any payments made by check or ACH deposit that are returned to the district by the bank with

the notice of “insufficient funds” “NSF.” All accounts must be settled at the end of the school year.

When a check or ACH deposit is returned for insufficient funds “NSF” a letter will be sent to inform the parent/guardian from the Food Service Director. Payment for the NSF check must be in the form of a cashier’s check or money order. Payment must be received within ten (10) days of the date of the letter and include monies owed plus any bank penalty fee and will be made payable to: Coventry/Andover School Nutrition Services. Payment should be sent to: 1776 Main Street, Coventry, CT 06238.

Adult Purchases

Staff may set up an account for purchases by calling the food service office at 860-742-4535.

Staff and faculty are expected to pay for all meals received from the Food Services Department. Staff and faculty may also purchase any of our a la carte items using funds on their accounts or cash at the point of sale. Staff will not be allowed to charge any meals or a la carte food items that will cause their account to go into deficit balance.

Annual Notice

Parents and students shall receive notification of this policy on an annual basis through an e-blast which includes an application for meal benefits, instructions for submitting the application, information on the SNAP program (formerly Food Stamps), Husky Benefits, and an information release form to receive additional benefits such as waived chrome book or AP testing fees. It will also be posted on the Coventry Public Schools website under the Food Services Department page.

Administrative Council: May 19, 2022