

Administrative Procedures for Policy #4305 (Supporting Services) Regarding Administration and Operation of the School Child Nutrition Program

I. Purpose

- A. The Child Nutrition Program Office administers and manages Calvert County Public School (CCPS) child nutrition programs in accordance with the objectives, policies and procedures of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA) and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). The programs administered by the Child Nutrition Program Office include the National School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program and an à la carte sales program.
- B. The objectives of the CCPS Child Nutrition Program shall include encouraging students to select and consume nutritionally balanced meals. The Child Nutrition Program Office supports the educational program by providing nutritious meals in an environment that meets proper sanitation and health standards and conforms to all applicable state and local laws and regulations.

II. Records and Reports

- A. The Child Nutrition Program Office will operate a non-profit Food Service Program in compliance with MSDE financial guidelines including those listed in the Maryland Accountability and Reporting System (MARS) pertaining to Financial Management Responsibilities. The Child Nutrition Program Office shall be responsible for the proper management of its fiscal resources and will be subject to internal and external audits.
- B. The Child Nutrition Program Office will maintain a financial management system as outlined in the School and Community Nutrition Programs Financial, Accounting and Reporting Manual published by MSDE.
- C. Financial records including inventories and menu production sheets will be maintained in accordance with MSDE Management and Operations pertaining to Record Retention Responsibilities.

III. Meal Cost

- A. The breakfast and lunch meal prices are recommended by the Child Nutrition Program Supervisor to the Superintendent. The Superintendent submits the recommendations to the Board of Education for final approval. Adults and non-students shall be charged à la carte prices for all food and beverages. The Child Nutrition Program Supervisor or his/her designee sets the prices for à la carte items.

IV. Free and Reduced Price Meals

- A. At the beginning of the school year, a notice is distributed to each household of children attending CCPS. This notice informs the households of the availability of free or reduced-price meals to those individuals who are determined to be eligible for these

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Procedures Written: 12/3/08

Procedures Revised: 10/22/10; 02/1/12; 9/18/15; 7/1/17; 8/19/19; 2/3/22; 8/21/2023

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benefits. Eligibility is determined by using the income eligibility guidelines as required, which are developed and published in the Federal Register by the USDA and distributed annually by MSDE. Students may also be eligible for free or reduced-price meals if they are determined to be categorically eligible (currently participating in or residing in a household that is currently participating in certain government assistance programs) or are directly certified in accordance with the Eligibility Manual for School Meals created by the Food and Nutrition Service - Child Nutrition Programs section of the USDA.

- B. An application for Free or Reduced Meal Benefits may be submitted to the Free and Reduced Meal (FARM) Program administrator at a student's assigned school at any time during the year. After reviewing applications for completeness, FARM program administrators forward applications to the CCPS Child Nutrition Program Office for processing.
 - C. A verification process is completed annually on a predetermined percentage of submitted FARM applications in accordance with federal regulations and MSDE guidelines. The verification process is completed by the individual specified on the School and Nutrition Programs Agreement and Policy Statement Renewal form. The verification process verifies the income information supplied by the households on the Household Meal Benefit Application. Applications are selected at random using a computer-generated list. After the list has been generated, households are notified via a letter sent in the mail. The letter explains the verification process in more detail and includes a list of the documentation that is required to be submitted in order to complete the process. Once all documentation has been received, households are notified regarding their child's meal status, including an explanation for any change in status that may have occurred.
 - D. Parents may talk to the Director of Procurement and Resource Management or his/her designee if they disagree with the school system's decision regarding their child's/children's meal benefit eligibility or the results of the verification process. They may also request a fair hearing by writing to the Child Nutrition Program Office. This process is overseen by the school system's designated hearing official.
- V. Insufficient Meal Funds
- A. We appreciate having the opportunity to serve your students. To help us serve them efficiently, Parents/Guardians are expected to ensure meal account funds are kept current. To assist parents/guardians with monitoring student account purchases and balances, they are strongly encouraged to register online at <https://LinqConnect.com>. This site also has a low balance notification service (free), allows parents/guardians to set spending limits (free) and provides the ability for one-time or automated meal account payment options (fee applies).
 - B. The procedure below applies every day school is in session:
 - 1. CCPS strives to provide nutritionally balanced meals to students daily, even if they occasionally run out of money on their account or forget to bring money to purchase a meal. As a courtesy, students who have insufficient funds on their account will be allowed to borrow for the regularly scheduled meal as listed on the menu. There will be no borrowing for à la carte/snack purchases.

2. When borrowing occurs, the primary contact on file for the student will be notified via an automated E-mail message. Messages will be sent via the cafeteria meal management system and will include information about the amount borrowed as well as a reminder that the parent/guardian is responsible for repaying the amount owed as soon as possible. The amount owed is to be repaid directly to the cafeteria and may be done via check, cash or by depositing funds online at <https://LinqConnect.com>.
3. Students may always purchase a meal with "cash in hand" regardless of the amount owed.
4. As a courtesy, students will be notified by the cashier when their account balance drops below \$5.00. Parents/Guardians may also set up their own low balance notifications online at <https://LinqConnect.com>.
5. Households are encouraged to submit a meal benefit application each year to see if they qualify for free or reduced-price meal benefits. Both free and reduced-price meal benefits provide meals at no cost to families. Meal benefit applications are welcome anytime throughout the year.
6. If occurrences become excessive and the debt remains unpaid, school administration in conjunction with the Student Services Department, will work with the family or local agency regarding follow-up.
7. School administration or designee will work with parent/guardian to reclaim unpaid debt by the end of the school year.
8. Information regarding the CCPS Insufficient Meal Funds procedure will be provided in writing to households upon request (443-550-8680) and is available on the Child Nutrition Department section of the Calvert County Public Schools website.

VI. Mealtimes

- A. Per USDA regulations 7CFR §210.10 (f) (1) & (3), schools must offer lunch during the period the school has designated as the lunch period. In addition, schools must offer lunches between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. Schools interested in serving lunch outside of this time frame must request an exemption from the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) branch of the USDA. FNS encourages schools to provide sufficient breakfast and lunch periods that are long enough to allow students enough time to be served and to consume their meal.

VII. Nutrition

A. Standards

1. School Meals

- a. Meals are analyzed by the Child Nutrition Program Supervisor or his/her designee over the course of a week rather than as a single meal or food item and are designed to meet or exceed the nutrition requirements set forth by the HHFKA and USDA pertaining to the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs. Main course food items offered in all

schools as an alternative to or in addition to reimbursable meals will be offered in reasonable portion sizes that are consistent with guidance provided by the HHFKA and USDA's Child Nutrition Program. All students will be provided access to a variety of affordable, nutritious and appealing foods as menus are designed to achieve a balance between overall nutrition, student acceptance and cost effectiveness. All schools will be required to provide approved school meals each day that school is in session.

2. Prepackaged À la carte Foods and Beverages

- a. Foods and beverages sold á la carte will be required to meet the "Smart Snack" standards per grade level as established by the HHFKA.

B. Information

1. The Child Nutrition Program Supervisor or his/her designee posts menus on the CCPS website. In addition, school cafeteria employees post menus in each school cafeteria.
2. The Child Nutrition Program utilizes Nutrislice software to share menus on the CCPS website. This software program allows for easy access to nutrition and allergen information for many of the menu items served in our cafeterias. Additional information may be obtained by contacting the Child Nutrition Office.

VIII. Food Allergies/Disabilities Affecting Diet

- A. Parents/Guardians of students with life-threatening food allergies or disabilities affecting diet should obtain and complete a copy of the Diet Modification Form. This form may be obtained from the school nurse or by accessing it under the Child Nutrition Department section on the CCPS website. Once this form (or other acceptable written documentation) has been completed and signed by a licensed physician, it is to be returned to the School Nurse. The information is then shared with the Dietitian/Nutrition Specialist who places an alert on the student's meal account and modifies menus when necessary. Parents/Guardians should contact the Child Nutrition Office for additional information or with any concerns. Please note that this completed medical documentation must be on file in order to make menu modifications.

IX. Sanitation

- A. To ensure the health and safety of students, the Child Nutrition Program shall comply with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) and local health department regulations.
- B. A minimum of two sanitation reviews will be completed at each licensed site by the Environmental Health Division of the Calvert County Health Department.

X. Use of Kitchen Facilities

- A. Organizations or groups wishing to utilize school kitchen facilities are required to complete the form entitled "Applications Procedures for Kitchen Use" (Procedure 8120.4) and submit the completed application using the procedures outlined in "General Procedures" (Procedure 8120.1).

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- B. The storage of food and/or supplies within the school kitchen facilities by groups other than the CCPS Child Nutrition Program is strongly discouraged due to limited storage space. If, however, permission is granted by the Child Nutrition Program Supervisor or his/her designee to store items to be used outside of the Child Nutrition Program, the stored items are to be segregated from that of the food and supplies utilized for the CCPS Child Nutrition Program.