

Charging Policies

- All meals must be paid for in advance of consuming them
- Child(ren) should bring money first thing Monday morning
- Please pay for a minimum of one week at a time, if at all possible. We suggest keeping at least \$5-7 in your child's account at all times, if you are a full-paying or reduced-paying household.
- The charge limit will be set at \$12.50 or one week's worth of meals
- A la carte items may not be charged for any reason
- Students who charge a meal will receive a reimbursable meal
- Employees of Hale County School System are NOT allowed to charge a meal
- Guests/Visitors of Hale County School System are NOT allowed to charge a meal
- Children that accrue charges will have written notifications sent home weekly
- Students whose parents have applied for Free and Reduced Meals must still pay for meals until approval is official. Benefits are not retro-active. Parents are responsible for ALL meals their child(ren) eat until official approval is made by the Child Nutrition office. This can take up to 10 days. A notification letter will be sent home. Parents who are waiting for approval from the Child Nutrition office for Free and Reduced meals must provide for student meals by sending money or packing a lunch.
- When the limit (\$12.50) is reached, elementary students and students with disabilities will be given an alternate meal which will include a turkey or cheese sandwich, fruit, and milk until full payment is received. Middle school and high school students will not be allowed to charge more than \$10.00 and will not have the option of receiving an alternate meal.

- ***Notification of Negative Balance***

The Child Nutrition Program (CNP) staff will notify households of negative balances. The Cafeteria Manager or designee will be responsible for contacting households via telephone, by US mail or by sending a letter home with the student. Written notifications to households will include the amount of unpaid meal charges, expected payment dates, the consequences of nonpayment and where to go for questions or assistance. Written notifications will be sent home on a weekly basis with each student whose account has a negative balance. Outstanding balances from meals charged are not an allowable expense of the Child Nutrition Program. Charges must be collected by the end of the school year or paid by the local school from a non-public source. The Administration at the school should assist in collection of this money and documentation of efforts should be maintained. A check for any outstanding balance should be issued to the CNP program by the last day of school.

- ***Bad Debt***

Bad debt is defined as delinquent debt that is deemed uncollectible at the end of the school year. Bad debt is unallowable in the Child Nutrition Program and cannot be carried over to the next school year. Funds resulting from bad debt cannot be recovered using CNP funds or the District's general fund. Bad debt must be paid using non-public funding sources. Bad debt must be restored to the CNP account prior to the end of the same fiscal year. When a household has reached the \$12.50 limit, collection procedures will be initiated. CNP staff will send a letter to the household with the amount of debt and date of expected payment. If payment or arrangements to pay have not been satisfied, CNP staff will report the debt to school administration. The school administration will contact the household and attempt to collect the debt. If payment is not received and/or if a parent regularly fails to provide meal money or send food to school with the student and the student does not qualify for free or reduced benefits the Cafeteria Manager will inform the principal, who will determine the next course of action, which may include notifying the department of social services of suspected child neglect and/or taking legal steps to recover the unpaid meal charges.

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