



NUTRITION SERVICES CHARGING POLICY

Region 10 recognizes the importance of each student having access to good nutrition throughout the school day. The District's nutrition services program is dedicated to providing good-tasting, nutritious and affordable meals in pleasant surroundings. In addition, the District participates in the National School Lunch program, enabling students who are eligible to receive free and reduced-price meals.

Advance Payment for Meals

Parents and guardians are responsible for ensuring that students' meals are paid for in advance or at the time of purchase. The District uses an online, automated prepayment system which allows parents and guardians to make deposits to their child's school meal account. Students may also pay at the register with cash or check at the time of purchase.

Insufficient Funds in Account for Meals

In order to prevent students from missing any meals at school due to insufficient funds in the student's account, the Board approves the establishment of a system to allow students to charge for a meal. Charging for meals must be reserved for emergencies and other unplanned occasions when a student does not have money to purchase a meal. Repayment for the charged meal is expected without delay.

Guidelines for Charging

The District's food service program cannot be operated effectively unless parents and guardians pay for meals in advance or at the time of purchase. In addition, federal regulations prohibit the use of funds in the non-profit school food service account from being used to cover the cost of charged meals that have not been paid. Therefore, the Board establishes the following guidelines regarding charging for meals:

- Any student whose account has insufficient funds and does not bring a meal from home may charge up meals.
- No a la carte items other than milk may be charged.
- Adults are not allowed to charge for meals and shall pay for such meals at the time of service or through their pre-paid lunch account.

Communication with Parents and Guardians

The District uses an online, automated prepayment system, which allows parents/guardians to view their child's meal account balance and purchases, receive low-balance notifications, as well as make deposits to their child's school meal account. Negative balance status can be avoided by making a payment in the form of cash, check or by payment to the designated website.

Negative balance reminders will be sent via phone call and e-mail to any student who has unpaid charges. If payment is not received, a formal letter will be sent, and a follow up call will be made to the parent/guardian. Communication to the parent/guardian shall include information regarding local food pantries; application for Region 10 free or reduced-price meals and for the supplemental nutrition assistance program administered by the Department of Social Services; and a link to the website of the town of the student's residence listing any community services available to the residents of such town.

If the unpaid charges due are equal to or more than the cost of thirty meals, such parent/guardian shall be referred to Region 10's Liaison for Homeless Students. Publicly identifying or shaming a student for any such unpaid charges, including but not limited to, delaying or refusing to serve a meal to such student, designating a specific meal option for such student or otherwise taking any disciplinary action against such student is prohibited.

Unpaid Meal Charges

Unpaid meal charges will be considered "delinquent debt". Region 10 may refer delinquent debt to a collection service. Region 10's efforts to recover from parents/guardian's money owed due to charging 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. Delinquent debt that has not been recovered by June 30th will be considered "bad debt". Bad debt will be written off as an operating loss and will not be absorbed by the nonprofit school food service account but must be restored using nonfederal funds.

As funds from the nonprofit school food service account may not be used to cover the cost of charged meals, all charges not paid before the end of the school year will be refunded to the school lunch account.

Region 10 may accept gifts, donations or grants from any public or private source for the purpose of paying off any unpaid charges for school meals.

Notice of Policy

This policy shall be included in student handbooks, 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 being distributed regarding free and reduced-price meals.

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.

10-221 Boards of education to prescribe rules, policies, procedures

Public Act 21-46

Operational Memorandum #3-15, State Department of Education, “Federal Register Request for Information: Unpaid Meal Charges”

Operational Memorandum #19-10, State Department of Education, “Unallowable Charges to Non-profit School Food Service Accounts and the Serving of Meals to No-paying Full and Reduced-Price Students”

Federal statutes:

42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq., National School Lunch Program

7 C.F.R. §§ 210.10, 210.12, 210.33 and 245.8

Section 143 of Public Law 111-296, Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

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