

## **AR EF-R Food Services**

*Issued 6/17*

### **Student Meal Accounts**

All cafeteria purchases should be prepaid before meal service. The district offers a variety of methods for parents/legal guardians to fund their students' meal accounts including check, cash, or online payment.

#### **Charge accounts**

##### *Elementary School Students CD-5*

Elementary students will be allowed to charge a total of FIVE (5) MEALS. A letter will be sent home with the student stating that he/she will not be allowed to charge any more meals before receiving the alternative meal. After FIVE charges have occurred, the FIVE charges must be paid in full before the student may have a regular lunch.

##### *Middle School Student 6-8*

Middle school students will be permitted to charge THREE (3) MEALS. A letter will be sent home with the student stating that he/she will not be allowed to charge any more meals before receiving the alternative meal. After THREE charges have occurred, the THREE charges must be paid in full before the student may have a regular lunch.

##### *High School Students 9-12*

High School students will NOT be permitted to charge meals. If a student does not have money to pay for lunch he/she will be offered an alternative lunch.

A student may charge up to grade level maximum. A student who charges a meal may not charge any à la carte items or additional items that would result in a cost above and beyond the base meal cost. Parents/Legal guardians will receive at least one written notification prior to a student being denied the ability to charge meals.

Food service employees and each building principal will work together to prevent meal charges from accumulating. Parents/Legal guardians are expected to pay all meal charges in full by the last day of the school year. Negative balances that remain will be carried forward to the following school year.

#### **Alternate meals**

Once a student has received the maximum number of charged meals, he/she will be provided with an alternate meal consisting of sandwich and milk. Students will not be charged for an alternative meal. In order to safeguard the dignity and confidentiality of students, reasonable efforts must be used to avoid calling attention to a student's unpaid balances and/or inability to pay.

No student will be denied an alternate meal. If a student comes to school with no lunch and no money on an ongoing basis, food service employees or other mandated reporters will report this information to the building principal as this may be a sign of abuse or neglect, and the proper authorities will be contacted.

Modifications will be made to alternate meals to ensure that any students with medically documented special dietary needs are provided with appropriate accommodations.

## **Unpaid balances**

Students with unpaid balances will not be denied a meal if they have money in hand for a meal on a given day.

The food service manager and other school personnel will coordinate communications to parents/legal guardians to resolve unpaid balances in meal accounts. Weekly reminders will be sent home. These communications will include providing families with information about the free and reduced lunch programs and the programs' application process.

Parents/legal guardians are encouraged to discuss payment arrangements with the food service manager and building principal. In establishing the terms of repayment plans, the district will assess each household's particular circumstances and will consider factors including, but not limited to, employment status, and/or family medical situation. Negative balances not paid in full within 30 days of the last instructional day of the school year will be turned over to the child nutrition director to initiate formal collection efforts, up to and including legal action if appropriate, to recover the costs for unpaid meal charges.

## **Surplus balances**

At the end of the school year, surplus balances in student meal accounts for those students who pay full price for meals will be carried over to the next school year. Students who qualify for reduced price lunch will receive a full refund of any surplus balances.

Students who graduate or withdraw will be notified by mail and given the option to receive a refund or to transfer the surplus meal account funds to students with negative balances. If no response is received within 30 days of the mailing of this notification, the student's meal account will close.

## **Dissemination of procedures**

At the beginning of each school year, the information contained in this administrative rule and any associated procedures will be shared with administrators, principals, school food service professionals, and other district stakeholders charged with duties related to the school food services program. Parents/Legal guardians and students will be notified in writing of this rule and any associated procedures at the beginning of the year, upon transferring into the district, or upon transferring into a new school within the district.

Issued 6/13/17

**The School District of Edgefield County**

---