

Policy 7.35: Food Service Charged Meals

Status: ADOPTED

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Charged Meal Policy

7.35

The goal of the St. Clair County Child Nutrition Program (CNP) is to provide nutritious meals to children during the school day while complying with National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program regulations. It is the responsibility of the child nutrition staff, the school principal, and the CNP central office staff to ensure participating students are provided a meal. This policy shall be communicated in writing to all households at the start of each school year and to households transferring into the St. Clair County School System during the school year.

Families are encouraged to apply for free or reduced priced meals to help reduce meal costs to qualifying households. Information about applying can be found on the district website at [www.sccboe.org\(https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SU/8dIgL5vBnyRplusKLUfw1qplusQ==\)](https://simbli.eboardsolutions.com/SU/8dIgL5vBnyRplusKLUfw1qplusQ==).

It is the policy of the St. Clair County School System to provide a reimbursable meal to each child in the System who wants one, even if the child is not able to pay at the point of service. Consequently, students without sufficient money in their student meal accounts or in hand will be allowed to charge a reimbursable meal to their meal accounts. Students may not charge or purchase a la carte items or extras if they have a negative balance in their meal accounts regardless of the student's eligibility status. A la carte or extras may be removed from the student's tray prior to purchase.

All adults, employees, and other non-students must pay for their meals at the point of service and will not be allowed to charge meals or a la carte items to a meal account.

The St. Clair County School System will not notify parents or guardians of low balances in a student's meal account; however, the System will notify parents or guardians within one (1) school day when a student's meal account has a negative balance. Attempts will be made to collect the money owed. Parents or guardians will be notified of negative account balances via email, letters, verbally by phone from school administrators, CNP Manager(s), or CNP Director(s). The System may not enlist the assistance of unauthorized persons, such as parent volunteers, to follow up with payment reminders or debt collection efforts related to unpaid meal charges. An automated calling system will also communicate negative balances to households. A list of negative balances will be provided weekly to each principal by the CNP Manager.

When a student, or multiple students in the same household have accrued negative charges in excess of \$20.00, there will be an investigation by the school's principal and the CNP Director. The Department of Human Resources may be contacted as deemed necessary by school administrators.

Federal funds cannot be used to pay the costs of uncollected meal charges. Therefore, all uncollected meal charges will be the responsibility of the school where the child's attendance is maintained during the time the charges occurred. At the end of each school year, the principal will reimburse the CNP for any uncollected meal charges using non-public school funds. The local school shall be responsible for seeking reimbursement from parents, guardians, or other adults responsible for uncollected meal charges to restore the non-public school funds used to pay the CNP. Debt collection efforts will focus on the responsible adult(s), not the child. The System reserves the right to seek all available legal remedies to recover uncollected meal charges, including, but not limited to, submitting those charges to a collection agency.

When any student seeks to withdraw, graduate, or otherwise leave the St. Clair County School System, it is the responsibility of the local school administration to communicate with the CNP Manager at the student's school to determine if any uncollected meal charges are owed or if any money needs to be refunded to the student.

Households may request a refund of any funds remaining in a student's meal account at the time of withdrawal or graduation. A refund request form must be completed for any person requesting a refund. Households who do not request a refund at the time of withdrawal or graduation will be deemed to have donated any funds remaining in a student's meal account to cover unpaid meal charges of other students. Households approved for free or reduced meal benefits must receive a refund of any funds remaining in the student's account.

All negative student meal account balances must be settled prior to a student's withdrawal, graduation, or departure from the System.

Positive student or adult account balances shall automatically transfer to a student's or employee's new school within the System without further action from the student or employee. However, students transferring to another school within the System must pay their negative meal account balances prior to transferring to the new school. It is the responsibility of the local school administration to communicate with the CNP Manager at the student's school to determine if any uncollected meal charges are owed.

The CNP Director shall establish an unpaid meals account ("Angel Fund") at each school to be used to cover the unpaid meal charges of other students. All money remaining in the meal accounts of unenrolled students or adults no longer affiliated with the St. Clair County School System at the end of each school year will be deemed to have been donated to the Angel Fund set up for each school. In addition, the school may accept

donations to the Angel Fund. Donated money will be used to pay uncollected meal charges accrued by other students at that school.

The St. Clair County Schools Charged Meal Policy is developed with a committee of Administrators and CNP Personnel. The Charged Meal Policy will be included in the student and employee handbook each school year. The policy will also be made available at the beginning of each school year to those responsible for enforcing the policy.

REFERENCE(S):

16-8-9

CODE OF ALABAMA

16-13A-1

HISTORY:

Last Revised Date 2/22/2010

ADOPTED: 6/17/2002
