



Book	Administrative Guideline Manual
Section	8000 Operations
Title	PROCEDURE FOR THE COLLECTION AND PAYMENT FOR CHARGED MEALS (ds)
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8500D - PROCEDURE FOR THE COLLECTION AND PAYMENT FOR CHARGED MEALS

It is the responsibility of the parents to provide for lunch for their children while at school. However, it is important to provide that children receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day. This procedure shall apply in the event that a child neither has a lunch nor the funds to purchase a lunch.

BUCKEYE SCHOOLS MEAL CHARGING POLICY

The Buckeye School District has adopted the following Meal Charging Policy in order to allow students to receive nutritious meals, prevent over-identification of students with insufficient funds to pay for school meals and maintain the financial integrity of the non-profit school nutrition program. This policy was written pursuant to U.S. Department of Agriculture Memo SP 46-2016 "Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies."

The Food and Nutrition Service is a self-supporting, Federal program. Any delinquent payments must be absorbed by the Food Service Department, which in turn, depletes the resources the department has to offer great tasting, nutritious meals to the students at Buckeye Local Schools.

Parents/Guardians are responsible for all charges placed on their students' accounts. We encourage all families to register on PayForIt.net, the online payment site for Buckeye. To set up an account, please see the PayForIt.net online school payment informational sheet on the school Food Service website. Parents/Guardians can view their student(s) purchases, add money to accounts electronically and can receive low balance reminder notices, which can be sent to your email or phone.

If a parent/guardian does not wish their student to have the ability to charge, they may contact the Food Service Office by email (cafeteria@buckeyeschools.org) or by phone at (330) 722-8257, Ext. 1018, and ask them to place a "no charge" or "no purchasing snacks" on their student's account.

We understand emergencies can occur and a student can leave home without having lunch or lunch money in their account. Students at Buckeye Local Schools will not be allowed to charge over -\$20.00 towards the purchase of a complete meal. Ala carte Items (chips, extras, beverages, etc.) cannot be charged and must be paid for with cash at the time of purchase.

If a student makes a purchase at the cash register that requires them to receive change, the cashier must check their lunch balance and ensure they do not have a negative balance. If a negative balance is present, Buckeye Local Schools reserves the right to collect up to \$10.00 each transaction as long as the balances is negative. If they have a positive balance, they have the choice of placing the extra change on their food service account or receiving the change back.

Free/Reduced Applications

Parents/Guardians are urged to fill out a Free/Reduced Application if they believe their gross income qualifies them for free/reduced status. Applications are accepted by the Food and Nutrition Office year-round. If a parent/guardian experiences a loss of income due to being laid off (including seasonal layoffs) or the loss of employment anytime through the school year, a Free/Reduced Application can be submitted. Once your household receives free or reduced status you

remain on that status for the remainder of the school year. Applications can be found in the main offices at all Buckeye schools, the Food Service Office and online at the food service website. Applications are processed as soon as they are received, and the household will receive notification within five (5) business days.

Balance Notifications

All students charging meals will receive a "low balance letter" when they reach the -\$10.00 balance threshold and every week afterward until the balance falls below the -\$10.00 threshold. When a student reaches a -\$15.00 balance, the household will be contacted by the Director of Food Services, Building Principal, or District Administrator, alerting the parent/guardian to the negative balance and requesting payment. Along with the notification, they will be reminded of the -\$20.00 threshold and their student's inability to be able to charge once they reach it.

In addition, any age 15 and over with a balance over the above-noted amounts will conference with the Principal in an order to assess the following:

- A. Offer assistance with completing an application to determine the student's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals,
- B. Determine whether there may be household issues preventing the student(s) from having sufficient funds for school meals (please refer to Emergency Free Meals Standard Operating Procedures), and
- C. Offer any other appropriate assistance.

Year-End Negative Lunch Balances

If a student is graduating, their negative lunch balance will be added to their school fees, which must be paid before they receive any transcripts from the school district. The other times when negative lunch balances may hinder your student from participating in a school activity include, but are not limited to:

- A. Class Overnight Trips
- B. Prom
- C. School Dances/Homecoming

For seniors, negative balances will be transferred from the Food Service Office to the Treasurer's Office by April 15th and placed in their student fees account. Once those fees have been paid, the Treasurer's Office will notify the Food Service Department that the balance has been paid in full, which will allow Food Service to document their "paid" status. All unpaid balances will be paid in full prior to a student moving from one school building to another within the school district. Any negative balance from the elementary and junior high will follow the student until they reach high school, and will be recorded as unpaid fee balances from previous school years until the fees are paid in full.

Positive Lunch Balances (Unclaimed Funds)

Withdrawn and/or graduating students with positive lunch balances may request refunds up to 14 days after the end of the school year by contacting the food service office by email at cafeteria@buckeyeschools.org. Please include the student's full name and the current address to which the payment should be mailed.

Positive balances can be transferred to sibling accounts, as well, by contacting the Food Service Department by email (cafeteria@buckeyeschools.org) and requesting a transfer. Please include the student's name and ID for the account the transfer is originating from, as well as the student name(s) and student ID(s) to which the funds will be transferred.

Any positive balance left on a graduating student account after 14 days will be transferred into the food service unclaimed funds and cannot be refunded. If your student's account held more than \$50.00 and a refund was not requested within the allotted time frame, the Food Service Department will attempt to contact the parent/guardian. If this is not successful, those funds will be transferred to the "BFF".

Donations

The Buckeye Food and Nutrition Department welcomes community donations year-round to help defray the monetary loss of bad debt accounts. Any funds received will be placed in the "BFF" and kept until the end of the school year, whereupon they will be used to defray the negative balances of those students who are:

- A. Withdrawn with no payment received,

- B. High school students who have graduated with no payment received,
- C. Free/Reduced status at the end of the year, and/or
- D. Paid status at the end of the year.

Anyone donating for a specified student may do so, however, student balances and or financial information will not be given to any individual donating for a specified student.

Upon donating, the individual or group will receive a receipt of their donation and have their donation recognized at the next possible board meeting.

A student's parents, teacher, and Principal will all be notified of the delinquency in the student's account each time it is necessary for the student to charge a meal to give the parents time to send a check or cash to school with their child to give to the Principal.

Parents may also pay for school meals via the Internet through the District's Nutrition Services website.

At the discretion of each Principal, a school or private service fund may be established to pay for student's charged meals, rather than to offer the alternative meal. The Nutrition Services Manager will work with each Principal to determine a payment schedule for these meals.

However, this guideline prohibits:

- A. the requiring of any student who cannot pay for a school meal or who has a negative meal payment balance to wear a wristband or handstamp;
- B. the requiring of any student who cannot pay for a school meal or who has a negative meal payment balance to perform chores or other work to pay for school meals;
- C. the requiring of any student to dispose of a meal after it has been served because the student is unable to pay for the meal or has a negative payment balance;
- D. discussing a negative meal payment balance with a student in the presence of other students.

The U.S Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). This institution is an equal opportunity provider. The Sponsor shall compile data, maintain records and submit reports, as required, to permit effective enforcement of the nondiscrimination laws and permit authorized USDA personnel during normal working hours to review such records, books and accounts as needed to ascertain compliance with the nondiscrimination laws. If there are any violations of this assurance, the USDA, Food and Nutrition Service, shall have the rights to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance. This assurance is binding on the Sponsor and its successors, transferees and assignees, as long as they receive assistance or retain possession of any assistance from the USDA. The person or persons whose signatures appear on the Sponsor Application are authorized to sign this assurance on behalf of the Sponsor. The Ohio Department of Education Office for Child Nutrition, 25 South Front Street, Mail Stop 303, Columbus, OH 43215-4183. (614) 466-2945. Additional information is available at: www.education.ohio.gov.

Last Modified by Sandy Cheney on April 24, 2024