



## CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

### MEAL CHARGING PROCEDURES

The Consolidated School District of New Britain Board of Education (the “Board”) recognizes the importance of providing nutritious food to students in New Britain Public Schools (the “District”).

The Board is a sponsor of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Services’ Child Nutrition Programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the District shall adhere to the federal and state guidelines and regulations pertaining to these school Child Nutrition Programs.

**The District is currently enrolled in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) and will provide one free breakfast and one free lunch every instructional day to all elementary and secondary students enrolled in the District.**

**Students are not allowed to charge second meals or a la carte purchases. Adults/Staff are not allowed to charge meals or a la carte purchases.**

**If and when the District no longer participates in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP), the following meal charging policy will take effect:**

In accordance with federal law, the Board will make a public announcement and notify parents and guardians of the eligibility criteria for free and reduced price meals and provide information regarding how a household may make an application for these benefits. Such notice and application will generally be distributed at the beginning of each school year.

#### **Charging Meals**

The District uses an automated prepayment system for student meal accounts. Students whose accounts have insufficient funds, and who do not bring a meal or other funds to school to pay for meals, may charge meals to their meal accounts. Students will be informed of their right to purchase a meal, which excludes a la carte items, for any school breakfast, lunch or other meal offered by the District, even if the student’s account has insufficient funds.

The Board prohibits publicly identifying or shaming a student for any unpaid meal charges, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Delaying or refusing to serve a meal to such student;
- Designating a specific meal option for the student; or •

Otherwise taking any disciplinary action against the student. Adults/Staff are not allowed to charge meals or a la carte purchases.

#### **Collection of Unpaid Meal Charges**

The District’s efforts to recover from households money owed due to the charging of 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. The District shall consider whether the benefits of potential collections outweigh the costs that would be incurred to achieve those collections.

For purposes of this policy, “delinquent debt” means unpaid meal charges.

The District will contact the parents/guardians of students who charge meals to their meal accounts in order for the District to collect the delinquent debt. Statements for all delinquent

debts will be sent weekly by mail or email. Subsequent written and verbal communications with parents/guardians concerning delinquent debt will be made by the building administrator or designee, as may be necessary and appropriate. All communications regarding unpaid meal charges shall be made directly and discreetly to parents/guardians. Written communications with parents/guardians regarding collection of a student's unpaid meal charges shall include an application for free or reduced price meals, information on local food pantries and the Connecticut Department of Social Services' supplemental nutrition assistance program, and a link to the District's or Town's website that lists any community services available to Town residents.

In the event a student's unpaid meal charges are equal to or more than the cost of thirty (30) meals, the parents/guardians of such student will be referred to the District's homeless education liaison.

The Board shall comply with applicable federal and state laws and other federal or state requirements concerning the collection of unpaid meal charges: including but not limited to requirements relating to delinquent debt and "bad debt," as defined by federal law, and recordkeeping relating thereto. The Board may accept gifts, donations or grants from any public or private sources for the purpose of paying off any unpaid charges for school lunches, breakfasts or other such feeding.

#### **Dissemination of Policy**

This policy shall be provided in writing to all households at the start of each school year and to households transferring to the District during the school year. This policy shall be provided to all District staff responsible for its enforcement. In addition, school social workers, nurses, the homeless liaison, and other staff members assisting children in need or who may be contacted by families with unpaid meal charges shall be informed of this policy.

The District shall maintain, to the extent required by law, documentation of the methods used to communicate these procedures to households and District staff responsible for policy enforcement.

The District shall provide these procedures to the Connecticut State Department of Education during Administrative Reviews.

The Superintendent or designee may, if necessary and appropriate, develop administrative regulations in furtherance of this policy.



**CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER**