

## SCHOOL LUNCH AND BREAKFAST PROGRAM CHARGE AND PAYMENT REGULATIONS

The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs are integral in ensuring that students have access to nutritious meals to support their academic success. It is also imperative to protect the financial stability of school nutrition program.

The intent of this regulation is to establish a processes and procedures for students to pay for school meals, to handle situations when children eligible for reduced-price or full-price meal benefits have insufficient funds to pay for school meals and for the collection of unpaid meal charges and delinquent account debt.

### 1. Payment of Student Meals

- a. Full-price students, students who qualify for reduced-price meals, and students who make ala-carte purchases may pay for their meals via cash each day at the point of sale. Students may also prepay for future purchases via cash, check or money order. Checks or money orders shall be made out to Alleghany Highlands Cafeterias.

### 2. Provision of Student Meals

- a. Students who qualify for free meals will not be denied a reimbursable meal even if they have accrued a negative balance on their cafeteria account.
- b. Students who have money to pay for a reduced-price or full price meal at the time of service must be provided a meal. If the student intended to use the money for that day's meal, the student's money shall not be used to repay a negative balance or other unpaid meal charge debt.
- c. Students who charge a meal will receive a reimbursable meal. Students may not charge a la carte or non-meal drink items.
- d. Alleghany County Public Schools do not require a student who cannot pay for a reimbursable meal at school or who owes a school meal debt to throw away or discard a reimbursable meal after it has been served to a student, do chores or other work to pay for such meals, or wear a wristband or hand stamp.
- e. The Alleghany County School Board does not file lawsuits against a student or the student's parent because they cannot pay for a reimbursable meal at school or owes a school debt.

### 3. Communication of Regulations

- a. The written meal charge regulation will be communicated to the household via posting on the Alleghany County Public School division website, inclusion in the student information packet distributed on the first day of school, distribution to all transfer students during the school year, and inclusion with the Meal Benefits Application.
- a. The written meal charge regulation will be communicated to all division staff prior to the first day of school.
- b. Child Nutrition Program staff will receive training on meal charge regulations, and a record of training will be maintained as part of the professional development portfolio.
- c. Documentation of the communication and training plan will be maintained for the Federal Program Administrative Review.

### 4. Notification to Parents

- a. For situations where prepayment has been made, the student's household will be notified when a student's cafeteria account balance falls below \$15.00. Student cafeteria account balances may be viewed at any time through the Parent Portal in PowerSchool.
- b. Parents are encouraged to monitor cafeteria account balances so as to avoid balances at the end of the school year. When student cafeteria accounts contain favorable balances at the end of the school year one of the following actions will be implemented:
  - i. For students who are not graduating or otherwise leaving the school division, the account balance will automatically be carried forward to the next school year. Parents may request a refund of any balance should they so choose.
  - ii. For students who are graduating or otherwise leaving the school division a refund of any balance of \$1.00 or greater will be mailed to the address on record in PowerSchool within 30 days of the end of school.
- c. The Division Cafeteria Manager will notify student households with negative account balances of \$5.00 or greater. Notification will be via a letter generated from the cafeterias' point of sale system and mailed through the United States Postal Service.
- d. For households with delinquent accounts, notifications will include the amount of unpaid meal charges, the expected dates of payment, the consequences of non-payment, and where to go for questions or assistance.
- e. The consequences of non-payment will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- f. The persons responsible for managing unpaid meal charges shall be:
  - i. School-based staff will collect payment for meals at the point of service (POS); and
  - ii. The Division Cafeteria Manager will contact households if the charges are not paid.

#### 5. Delinquent and Bad Debt

- a. Unpaid meal charges are considered delinquent debt when payment is overdue. Delinquent debt may be carried over to the next school year. The school food authority is required to make reasonable efforts to collect delinquent debt.
- b. Bad debt is defined as delinquent debt that is deemed uncollectible at the end of the school year. Bad debt is unallowable and cannot be carried over to the next school year. It must be written off as an operating loss and restored to the Cafeteria Fund from non-federal sources.
- c. At the end of the school year, the Division Cafeteria Manager and the Division Superintendent or Superintendent Designee will evaluate all delinquent debt for conversion to bad debt. Bad debt will be restored to the Cafeteria Fund through donations designated for such purpose, from the General Fund, or other non-Federal sources within 60 days of the end of the fiscal year.
- d. Efforts to collect delinquent and/or bad debt will be handled/coordinated by the Division Cafeteria Manager who should ensure that such efforts do not negatively impact the children involved, but focus on the parents or guardians responsible for providing funds for meal purchases. A minimum of three documented attempts to collect the delinquent/bad debt shall be made by the Division Cafeteria Manager prior to initiating formal collection procedures to include:
  - i. Send First and Second Letters Notification letters.
  - ii. Phone calls.
- e. Formal collection efforts may include:
  - i. Provision of a Notice of Adverse Action that formal collection efforts have begun.
  - ii. Provision of a statement of consequences if payment is not received.

#### 6. Assistance to Households

- a. Households with questions or in need of assistance may contact:

Debra Buckner, Division Cafeteria Manager  
P.O. Drawer 140, 100 Central Circle  
Low Moor, VA 24457  
(540) 863-1812  
[debra.buckner@ahps.k12.va.us](mailto:debra.buckner@ahps.k12.va.us)

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