

Meal Charge Policy

Since parents may sometimes forget to make pre-payments or send money with their children for school meals, the School Nutrition Program extends the courtesy of an occasional meal charge. It is the goal of the School Nutrition Program to make nutritious meals accessible to all students to help support their academic success. However, excessive meal charges can place financial and time burdens on the School Nutrition Program. The following practices have been established to assist students when they do not have money to pay for breakfast or lunch meals. Whenever a student is allowed to charge a meal, it is expected that his/her parent will repay the charge the following school day.

A. Elementary School (grades PK-5)

1. An elementary school student that does not qualify for free or reduced price school meals will pay full price for meals at the time they are served. If a student does not have enough money to cover the cost of a meal, a student may be allowed to charge.

- A student will be allowed to charge a maximum of \$8.00, the approximate cost of 2 breakfast meals and 2 lunch meals.
- A student will not be allowed to charge *a la carte* items such as juice, water, or an extra entrée.

2. An elementary school student that qualifies for **reduced price meals** will pay the reduced meal price at the time they are served. If a student does not have enough money to cover the cost of a meal, a student may be allowed to charge.

- A student will be allowed to charge a maximum of \$1.50, the approximate cost of 2 breakfast meals and 2 lunch meals.
- A student will not be allowed to charge *a la carte* items such as juice, water, or an extra entrée.

B. Middle School (grades 6-8):

1. A middle school student that does not qualify for free or reduced price school meals will pay full price for meals at the time they are served. If a student does not have enough money to cover the cost of a meal, a student may be allowed to charge.

- A student will be allowed to charge a maximum of \$5.00, the approximate cost of 1 breakfast meal and 1 lunch meal.
- A student will not be allowed to charge *a la carte* items such as juice, water, or an extra entrée.

2. A middle school student that qualifies for **reduced price meals** will pay the reduced meal price at the time they are served. If a student does not have enough money to cover the cost of a meal, a student may be allowed to charge.

- A student will be allowed to charge a maximum of \$1.00, the approximate cost of 1 breakfast meal and 1 lunch meal.
- A student will not be allowed to charge *a la carte* items such as juice, water, or an extra entrée.

C. High School (grades 9-12):

A high school student may not charge meals or *a la carte* items such as juice, water, milk, ice-cream, or an extra entrée. However, the student will be offered a courtesy meal at no cost. This courtesy meal will consist of a cheese sandwich with fruit and milk.

Meal Balance Notification:

Cashiers will verbally inform students of low account balances of \$3.00 or less.

Charge Notification:

When an elementary or middle school student has to charge a meal, the cashier will let the student know that a meal charge was allowed and that meal money is needed the following day. Additionally, written notification will be provided by the cafeteria to the student's parent or guardian.

- If charges are not repaid the following school day, and another charge is made, the cafeteria manager will call the parent to remind him/her that meal money is due.
- When a student reaches the charge limit, the parent has been informed, and the parent has not made repayment arrangements, the student will be offered a courtesy meal at no cost. This courtesy meal will consist of a cheese sandwich with fruit and milk.

Collection of delinquent debt:

Reasonable efforts are used to collect delinquent unpaid meal charges. Written notifications of negative balances are sent to parents as they occur. Phone calls are made to the parent by the cafeteria manager, the Supervisor of School Nutrition and/or the principal to remind him/her that meal money is due. Parents are expected to pay all meal charges in full by the last day of the school year. Unpaid balances that remain at the end of a school year will carry over to the next school year.

Since bad debt is not an allowable cost of the nonprofit school food service account, uncollectable delinquent meal charges will be referred to school principals who may elect to limit students' participation in extracurricular activities until these debts are paid. Uncollectable debts will also be reported to Pittsylvania County Schools' Finance Department which will determine the source of non-Federal funds that will be used to offset these debts.