

## **Business/Non-Instructional Operations**

### **Food Service**

#### **Charging Policy**

The goal of the food service program is to provide students with nutritious and healthy foods, through the District's Food Services program, that will enhance learning. The school nutrition program is an essential part of the education system and by providing good-tasting, nutritious meals in pleasant surroundings; we are helping to teach students the value of good nutrition.

The District has an agreement with the Connecticut State Department of Education to participate in one or more school Child Nutrition Programs and accepts full responsibility for adhering to the federal and state guidelines and regulations pertaining to these school Child Nutrition Programs. The District also accepts full responsibility for providing free or reduced price meals to eligible elementary and secondary students enrolled in the District's schools. Applicants for such meals are responsible to pay for meals until the application for the free or reduced price meals is completed and approved. All applications for free and reduced price lunch and any related information will be considered strictly confidential and not to be shared outside of the District's food services program. Meals are planned to meet the specified nutrient standards outlined by the United States Department of Agriculture for children based on their age or grade group.

Although not required by law, because of the District's participation in the Child Nutrition Programs, the Board approves the establishment of a system to allow a student to charge a meal.

The District realizes that funds from the non-profit school food service account, according to federal regulations, cannot be used to cover the cost of charged meals that have not been paid.

Moreover, federal funds are intended to subsidize the meals of children and may not be used to subsidize meals for adults (teachers, staff and visitors). Adults are not allowed to charge meals and shall pay for such meals at the time of service or through pre-paid accounts.

The District prohibits the public identification or shaming of a child/student for any unpaid charges, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Delaying or refusing to serve a meal to such student,
- Designating a specific meal option for such student or otherwise taking any disciplinary may exclude a la carte items, for any school breakfast, lunch or other feeding.

In order to sustain the District's food services program, the District cannot permit the excessive charging of student meals. Therefore, any charging of meals must be consistent with this policy and any accompanying regulations. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall develop regulations designed to effectively and respectfully address family responsibility for unpaid meals.

## **Business/Non-Instructional Operations**

### **Food Service**

#### **Charging Policy (continued)**

Any parent/guardian who anticipates a problem with paying for meals is encouraged to contact the Food Services Manager/Director and/or the applicable school Principal for assistance. The District encourages all families who may have a child eligible for free or reduced price lunch to apply.

The District uses an automated prepayment system, which allows parents/guardians to view their child's meal account balance and purchases, receive low-balance notifications, as well as, make deposits, to their child's school meal account. Any student whose account has insufficient funds (i.e., is at the charging limit) and does not bring a meal from home may charge any combination of meals up to an amount not to exceed the cost of thirty (30) meals. A-la-carte items shall not be charged. Negative balance status can be avoided by making a payment in the form of cash, check, or by credit card to an automated prepayment system.

Communications with parents/guardians regarding collection of a child's unpaid meal charges shall include information on local food pantries, application for free or reduced price meals and the Department of Social Services' supplemental nutrition assistance program and a link to the District's website that lists any community services available to town/city residents.

All charges must be paid in 10 days and/or an application for free and reduced meals should be submitted.

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 meals.

#### **Definitions**

**"Delinquent Debt"** are unpaid meal charges, like any other money owed to the nonprofit school food service account when payment is overdue, as defined by state or local policies.

**"Bad Debt"** are when unpaid meal charges are not collected and are considered a loss. Such debt must be written off as an operating loss, which cannot be absorbed by the nonprofit school food services account, but must be restored using nonfederal funds.

## **Business/Non-Instructional Operations**

### **Food Service**

#### **Charging Policy (continued)**

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-215 Lunches, breakfasts and other feeding programs for public school children and employees. (as amended by PA 21-46)

10-215a Nonpublic school and nonprofit agency participation in feeding programs.

10-215b Duties of State Board of Education re feeding programs.  
State Board of Education Regulations

State of Connecticut, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education Operational Memorandum No. 4-17, "Guidance on Unpaid Meal Charges and Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments," Nov. 2, 2016

Operational Memorandum #19-10, State of Connecticut, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education "Unallowable Charges to No-profit School Food Service Accounts and the Serving of Meals to No-paying Full and Reduced Price Students"

National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program; Competitive Foods. (7 CFR Parts 210 and 220, Federal Register, Vol 45 No. 20, Tuesday, January 29, 1980, pp 6758-6772

USDA Guidance:

- SP 46-2016, "Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies"
- SP 47-2016, "Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payment"
- SP 57-2016 "Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q and A"
- SP 58-2016 "2016 Edition: Overcoming the Unpaid Meal Challenge: Proven Strategies from Our Nation's Schools"

**Policy Adopted: 1/17/18**

**Policy Revised:**

**GRANBY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Granby, Connecticut**