

Procedures for Non-Payment of Meals

Walton County School District

The following process will be followed for students who charge meals or are unable to pay for meals at the time of service. The School Food Service program is funded through federal funds and cannot be used to subsidize payment of meals for students. Walton County School Food Services Department understands that at times you may forget to check account balances online or students may forget lunch money. We all know how critical a well-nourished body is for learning and achievement. To ensure our students are prepared to succeed, Walton County School District allows students to charge meals (breakfast & lunch) to their dining account when there are insufficient funds available. Parents are responsible for repaying all charges accrued.

To help remind parents that student accounts are low or there are insufficient funds, cafeteria managers will contact parents via letter, email, or phone call. After a negative \$12 balance accrues, additional attempts to contact the parent will be made by the cafeteria manager. If the account balance is negative an additional ten days, our school's cafeteria manager will contact the guidance counselor and school administration for a conference.

If parents need assistance with paying for meals at any time during the school year, they can complete a confidential meal benefit application online on our food services website or contact the school's cafeteria manager for assistance. We encourage and remind families that they may submit applications at any point during the year. Their children may become eligible for free meals if the household experiences an acute financial setback, such as job loss, reduced hours, or seasonal employment.

We accept the following methods of payment for our school meals.

- Cash
- Check
- Online payment through EZSchoolpay.com. It's fast, easy, efficient and funds are immediately available.

Your cooperation is crucial in maintaining the solvency of school food's services.

Summary of Procedures

- I. Students who receive a meal without the means to pay will accrue an unpaid meal balance.
- II. Students are not permitted to charge a la carte items and therefore a la cartes will not be a contributing factor to a child's negative account.

- III. If a student has made his/her way through the meal line and did not have payment, the meal will be served, and an unpaid meal balance will be accrued. Due to this circumstance, it is possible to have more than a -\$12.00 accrual balance.
- IV. No unwrapped meal will be taken away from the student.
- V. When a student in Grades K-5 reaches a negative balance in their lunch account.
 - a. The Food Service Manager will communicate to the parent or guardian via letter, email, or phone call. An application for free/reduced lunch will be offered to the parent/guardian along with a copy of the non-payment of meal policy. The child will be allowed to charge up to \$12.00 in meals, after that point, an alternate nutritional meal will be provided instead of the meal pattern of the day. This alternate meal will have all of the same components as the meal pattern of the day except a ham & cheese sandwich or turkey & cheese sandwich substituted for the entrée portion.
 - b. Once a debt of up to **-\$12.00** in unpaid meals accrues, the parent will be provided with a notice, application, and status of their child's account by the cafeteria manager and weekly follow-ups to the parent will be conducted via letter, email, or phone call as a means to collect the past due balance. The guidance counselor and school administrators will be notified and will contact the parent for a conference.
 - c. Reimbursable alternate meals will be served to students with a -\$12.00 balance or greater. Reimbursable breakfast meals will be served with a -\$12.00 or greater but the child's account will be charged.
- VI. When a student in Grades 6-12 reaches a negative balance in their lunch account.
 - a. The Food Service Manager will communicate to the parent or guardian via letter, email, or phone call. An application for free/reduced lunch will be offered to the parent/guardian along with a copy of the non-payment of meal policy. The child will be allowed to charge up to \$12.00 in meals, after that point, an alternate nutritional meal will be provided instead of the meal pattern of the day. This alternate meal will have all of the same components as the meal pattern of the day except a ham & cheese sandwich or turkey & cheese sandwich substituted for the entrée portion.

- b. Once a debt of up to **-\$12.00** in unpaid meals accrues, the parent will be provided with a notice, application, and status of their child's account by the cafeteria manager and weekly follow-ups to the parent will be conducted via letter, email, or phone call as a means to collect the past due balance. The guidance counselor and school administrators will be notified and will contact the parent for a conference.
 - c. Reimbursable alternate meals will be served to students with a **-\$12.00** balance or greater. Reimbursable breakfast meals will be served with a **-\$12.00** or greater but the child's account will be charged.
- VII. Any monies received will be applied to the unpaid balance.
- VIII. At the end of the school year, any unpaid balances for meals will carry over, and attempts will be made to parents to set up a long-term payment plan.
- IX. Alternate Meal will consist of all reimbursable components offered for the given day except the entrée. The entrée will be exchanged with a ham & cheese or turkey & cheese sandwich, which would be an option for all students in our best effort to prevent overt identification.
- X. Meal Charge Policy communication to parents will be delivered in several ways.
 - a. A copy of the policy along with lunch applications will be sent to parents with the "back to school" packets at the beginning of the school year.
 - b. Policy will be posted on the District's Food Services website
 - c. Copy of policy will be provided with written notices of low or negative account balances.
- XI. Meal Charge Policy communication to staff responsible for policy enforcement will be distributed in several ways.
 - a. Printed copies of the policy will be provided to all cafeteria managers and assistant managers during an in-house training discussing the proper procedures to follow.
 - b. Printed copies of the policy will be provided to principals and assistant principals during monthly meetings. An in-house training session will be provided by the District Food Services administrator discussing all aspects of the policy. Continual

feedback will grant us the opportunity to revise the policy on an annual basis to meet all the needs of foods services and student nutrition.

- XII. Procedures for Non-Payment of Meal Policy is set forth by the Superintendent and Food Services Administrator and may change on an annual basis.