

PITT COUNTY SCHOOLS MEAL CHARGE POLICY

Students who are required to pay for meals are expected to provide payment prior to or at the time of service. The board recognizes, however, that students occasionally may forget or lose their meal money. In the event that a student is unable to pay for a meal on a particular day, the student may charge a reimbursable meal. Students in Pre-K through 12th grade will be permitted to charge up to 7 breakfasts and 7 lunches. Individual food items cannot be charged by students or adults at any time. To safeguard the dignity and confidentiality of students in the serving line, reasonable efforts must be used whenever possible to avoid calling attention to a student's unpaid meal charges.

The school nutrition director and principal shall work jointly to prevent meal charges from accumulating and shall make every effort to collect all funds due to the school nutrition program on a regular basis and before the end of the school year. Notices of low or negative balances in a child's meal account will be sent by each cafeteria manager to parents and the principal at regular intervals during the school year. If a parent regularly fails to provide meal money and does not qualify for free or reduced-price meal benefits, the cafeteria manager shall inform the principal, who shall determine the next course of action, which may include notifying the department of social services of suspected child neglect and/or taking legal steps to recover the unpaid meal charges. Parents are expected to pay all meal charges in full as they occur, but no later than the last day of each school year. Principals will be permitted to notify parents in writing that meal charges will not be allowed during the last two (2) weeks of school.

Negative balances on student meal accounts will be carried forward to the following school year. However, the superintendent shall ensure that federal school nutrition funds are not used to offset the cost of unpaid meals and that the School nutrition Program is reimbursed for bad debt resulting from uncollected student meal charges prior to September 30 each year.

This policy and any applicable procedures regarding meal charges must be communicated to school administrators, school food service professionals, parents, and students. Parents will receive the meal charges policy and any applicable procedures at the start of each school year in the Parent/Student Handbook and at any time their child transfers into the school district from another school district during the school year.