



Fayette County Public Schools

"Where Excellence Counts"

School Nutrition Program

Meal Charge Procedure – Effective, January 2014

Fayette County Public Schools participate in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program which permits the school system to offer free and reduced-price meals to students who qualify. The School Nutrition Program (SNP) is a self-sustaining enterprise through the local board of education. Therefore, the program must rely on meal payments and federal/state reimbursements to fund the program.

Purpose of this Criteria/Procedure:

State Rule 160-5-6-.01 STATEWIDE SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM requires the School Food Authority (SFA) to make school meals available to every student in attendance between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Federal regulations prevent the denial of a meal to a student eligible for free meals, except under certain circumstances, such as when the parent has refused the program benefit. Neither state rules nor federal regulations require the service of meals to paid or reduced-price students without payment unless the SFA or school has been approved to be in the Special Assistance Certification and Reimbursement Alternative Provision.

The local SFA will ensure that the charge policy is available to all stakeholders through student handbooks and school websites.

Payment Responsibility for Free/Reduced Price Meal Applicants:

It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to provide the means for their student to be properly fed and ready to learn. In order to do this, parents have three options:

- Provide money for the student or students to purchase a school meal
- Complete the free/reduced application to determine the eligibility for meal benefits
- Send a lunch from home

All students are eligible to apply for free or reduced meal benefits. Federal guidelines allow school systems a maximum of **ten (10) days** to approve a new free and reduced-price meal application. No student is allowed a free and reduced-price meal without a current approved application on file in the School Nutrition Department. Parents/guardians who apply for free and reduced-price meal benefits are responsible for payment of all school meals and accumulated charges until approval is granted. Once approval is granted, parents will receive a notification letter showing the effective date of a student's eligibility. If a notification letter is not received

within ten (10) days, parents should check with the School Nutrition Central Office to see if the free and reduced application has been received.

Overt Identification:

Overt identification is any action that may result in a child being recognized as potentially eligible to receive or certified for free or reduced-price school meals. We will assure that a child's eligibility status is not disclosed at any point in the process of providing free or reduced-price meals, including notification of the availability of free or reduced-price benefits; certification and notification of eligibility; provision of meals in the cafeteria; and the point of service:

- Any meal cards, tickets, tokens, or other methods to obtain reimbursable meals will not be coded or colored in a manner that would overtly identify free and reduced-price eligible children.
- Steps are taken to ensure that rosters, computer screens, or other equipment used at the point of service cannot be viewed by anyone not needing the information, especially students. No one is allowed to stand behind the cashier, so information on the screen cannot be viewed.
- Information on the rosters or screens is masked or coded to avoid other students discerning any student's eligibility status. The point of sales has a privacy screen so that the screen cannot be viewed by people from the side of the computer.

Prepayment Options:

School breakfast and lunch accounts can be funded through multiple methods:

- Cash or check (\$300.00 maximum check limit) payments to the cafeteria
Please note that the Fayette County Board of Education uses Envision Payment Solutions™ as our check guarantee program for returned checks.
- MySchoolBucks.com using a debit or credit card in any amount

All monies paid will be deposited into the student's account. Any/all monies given to the cafeteria will first be applied towards all outstanding charge balances. Students with meal charges will be denied other purchases, such as a la carte, extra milk, etc. Parents can view their student's meal account balances in Infinite Campus and mylunchmoney.com.

Meal Charge Procedure:

Elementary Schools – maximum of **3 meal charges**

Middle and High Schools – **No charges**

Adult – **No charges**

Breakfast – **No charges**

A La Carte Items – **No charges**

Snack – **No charges**

*Note: In an effort to collect outstanding charges, no charges will be allowed in May for all grade levels.

*NOTE: Flexibility may be given at the beginning of the year or as needed for special circumstances.

Excessive Charges/ Alternative Meal:

The SNP desires that all students receive a healthy meal. Parents and/or guardians are responsible for providing the means for their child (ren) to be properly fed and ready to learn. In the event any student has reached the maximum charge limit, (3 for Elementary and 0 for Middle / High) the student will be given an alternative meal. **The alternative meal will include a cheese sandwich and milk or a side salad and milk only. Students with dairy allergies will receive a side salad, fresh fruit choice, and water.**

The alternative meal should be entered at the POS using the alternative meal key. The meal should also be tracked in the production record at the school by the manager. If a student has received the alternative meal 3 consecutive times, they must be referred to the school-level administrator. At that time, the administrator will need to decide whether to contact the student's parents or the school's social worker.

Manager Responsibility:

The SNP's goal is to communicate the charges with the Principal. As a result, the manager will give the Principal a copy of the negative balance list at the end of each month. The Principal will sign the list and return it to the manager, to verify receipt. The manager should turn in the signed copy of the negative balance list with his/her end-of-the-month reports to the SNP- Central Office.

Managers should print a list of students who have reached the maximum meal charge daily and identify the student to receive an alternative meal before getting a tray. Managers should issue the alternative meal in such a way as not to cause embarrassment to a child. They should also avoid taking food from a student and discarding it in their presence. Student's meal benefit status should remain confidential at all times. Managers should try to identify these students and contact the parents before reaching the point of sale. Managers are also responsible for ensuring all school nutrition personnel, including cashiers, are trained to enforce the school's charge policy consistently.

Principal Responsibility:

Students whose parents/guardians do not pay their meal charges will be referred to the Principal for assistance in collecting payment. Principals will assist Managers and cashiers in collecting outstanding meal charges. Principals will work with withdrawing, transferring and/or graduating students to collect all negative balances prior to the student's last day in school.

Principals have the discretion to reimburse school lunch charges. Principals also have the discretion to deny certain student privileges, i.e. parking passes for high school students or field trips.

Parental Notification:

The School Nutrition Department has partnered with Technology to send home automatic notifications to parents and guardians regarding charge balances using Infinite Campus.

Notifications will be sent via e-mail and phone to all messenger contacts in Infinite Campus. Notifications will be sent once a week and include any student who has the following:

- Balance less than \$5 AND account used (Low Balance Reminder)
- Balance less than \$0 regardless of usage (Negative Balance Reminder)

Deactivation of Parental Notification:

The School Nutrition negative balance notifications go out as a General Notification. Parents may wish to vary the settings in the Portal to indicate which phone numbers should be contacted for a general call. This will prevent parents from receiving non-emergency calls at work. A link to how these settings work is available from the login page of the Parent Portal and [here](#) if parents want to change their settings. Parents should remember that removing general permissions will discontinue any general notifications sent by the district, including weather-related notifications and school closure notifications. Parents may also select priority calls within the Parent Portal to select a contact number. Lunch is not considered a priority; therefore, this will discontinue the negative/low balance meal calls.

Check Guarantee Program:

The Fayette County School District has implemented a check guarantee program service provider. Envision Payment Solutions™ has been selected to provide this service. Envision Payment Solutions™ will guarantee qualified checks up to \$300.00. Please be aware that if your check is returned, it may be re-presented electronically. Also, in presenting a check for payment, you authorize service charges and processing fees to be debited from the same account should the check be dishonored. As permitted by state law, these fees may be debited as a paper draft or an electronic funds transfer, at our option. Each dishonored item is subject to the applicable state returned check fees. Specifically, per *Georgia Code Annotated § 13-6-15*, the service fee for returned checks is as follows:

- \$30 or 5% of the instrument, plus any fees charged to the instrument holder by a bank or financial institution as a result of the instrument not being honored.

(Note that the fee structure will change according to any amendments made to GA law during a school year.) If you wish to inquire about a returned check written to Fayette County School District, please contact Envision Payment Solutions™ directly at the information listed below.

Customers (check writers) with returned check inquiries should contact:

Envision Payment Solutions™

Tel 877- 290-5460, or 770-709-3100

Fax 770-709-3007

P.O. Box 157

Suwanee, GA 30024-0157

customerservice@envisionpayments.com

Annual Reimbursement to School Nutrition Program:

Student charges and alternative meals which are determined to be uncollectible should be recorded as a bad debt expense. "Bad debts" are not included as program expenditures in the School Nutrition Program. The Office of Management and Budget's Circular A-87, "Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments", Attachment B, Item 7, Bad Debt http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/fedreg/2005/083105_a87.pdf covers these situations. This directive states that bad debts, including losses (whether actual or estimated) arising from uncollectable accounts and other claims, related collection costs, and related legal costs, are unallowable. As a result, the district's General Funds must re-pay the School Nutrition Programs for these debts. Reimbursements should be made within the same fiscal year.

In an effort to collect outstanding charges, no charges will be allowed in the month of May for all grade levels.

Nondiscrimination Statement:

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail:
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax:
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email:
program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.