



HAMILTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL NUTRITION DEPARTMENT
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Chattanooga, TN 37407
423-498/423-209-5651 Fax

Hamilton County Department of Education Meal Charge Administrative Procedure

Effective Date: July 1, 2017

As provided in SP 46-2016, all school food authorities (SFAs) operating the federal school meal programs (National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program) must have a written and clearly communicated meal charge administrative procedure in place no later than July 1, 2017. All SFAs must have an administrative procedure in place for children participating at the reduced price or paid meal rate who either do not have money in their account or in hand to cover the cost of the meal at the time of service. SFAs are required to communicate this administrative procedure to families and school and/or district-level staff members as appropriate. SFAs should ensure the administrative procedure is communicated on an annual basis.

Families will have access to the meal charge administrative procedure via District website under the School Nutrition section. Families of transfer students (during the year) will be directed to the same website for the meal charge procedure.

Local Charge Administrative Procedure Considerations (according to the HCDE Board Policies):

General

Grade Pre-K through 8 students are allowed to charge breakfast and lunch, receiving a reimbursable meal of their choice.

High School Students in grades 9-12 are not allowed to charge.

Charge limits

Students in Grades Pre-K through 8 have no charge limit.

Students in Grades 9-12 cannot have any charge balance.

Household Notification for Charges

Negative balance notification:

Managers in schools with Grades Pre-K through 8 print off charge notification letters weekly, listing the negative balance each child in the household has for balances of \$5.00 or more (The software is designed to alert the SNP IT staff if a manager fails to do so and in turn, the area supervisors, Assistant Director and the Director are notified of this lack. The Area Supervisors contact their managers as a follow-up and reminder to do so.). For two consecutive weeks, they send them to each family. These letters are prepared and taken to the office for teachers to distribute to each student through their back-pack.

Household Notification for Charges, Continued

After those first two letters are sent from the school level, two escalating language letters are sent from the SNP Central Office to the parents.

If the balance gets paid but new ones occur, the above process repeats itself.

For any charge balance, the parent/guardian of each student account receives a weekly phone call and an email (if available through Power School, the student data base system). This continues throughout the school year.

In addition, our SNP IT staff sends a detailed balance of each student with charges to the District Finance Department. Calls are made from that office, the school level and from SNP cafeteria/SNP Central Office.

Delinquent Debt

Delinquent debt is defined as overdue unpaid meal charges that are considered collectable, with efforts being made to collect them. Families that accumulate a delinquent debt are sent a letter from the Assistant Superintendent of Finance stating that the school may withhold grade cards, diplomas, certificates of progress or transcripts until restitution is made. Also afterschool activities may be denied. Payment will be made to the school cafeteria.

Repayment plans

Each household may request a repayment plan that will include payment levels and due dates appropriate to a household's particular circumstances. Please contact the Central Office Finance Department for establishing a repayment plan.

Bad Debt

Bad debt is determined to be uncollectable, with further collection efforts for delinquent debt deemed useless or too costly. Delinquent debt will be considered as bad debt after September 1st of the following school year after which the debt occurred or until graduation .

- Bad debts (debts which have been determined to be uncollectable), including losses (whether actual or estimated) arising from uncollectable accounts and other claims, are unallowable. Related collection costs, and related legal costs, arising from such debts after they have been determined to be uncollectable are also unallowable (section 200.426 of subpart E).

Bad debts include checks returned for Non-Sufficient Funds. When a check is written to the School Nutrition Department for a student meal account and returned by the bank for any reason the following procedures are followed:

Parents are sent a letter notifying them of the check and that they have 10 days to pay. During that 10-day period, the parents are totalled to remind them about the check.

If the check is not paid, we send it to Payliance to attempt to collect the debt. If a check is written on a Closed Account or it is written for a large amount and is returned, the payment is adjusted from the student's account. This is done as soon as this department is notified by the bank.

At the end of year, if checks are not paid, the amount is declared as a bad debt and is added to the Unpaid Charges for the year, which is billed to Hamilton County Department of Education.

- Bad debt must be written off as an operating loss by June 30th of each school fiscal year. The nonprofit school food service account (NSFSA) resources may not be used to cover the costs related to the bad debt. The accumulated bad debt, which includes unpaid charges and unpaid bad checks, will be paid to the School Nutrition Program for the totals as of June 30th of each year. Once delinquent meal charges are converted to bad debt, records relating to those charges are maintained in accordance with record retention requirements in 7 CFR 210.9(b)(17) and 7 CFR 210.15(b).

Families may find assistance with applying for free or reduced price schools meals by Martha Ingram at 423-498-7290 or by e-mail, Ingram_m@hcde.org. However, each student is given a F/R application in their enrollment packets each school year. According to regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form. (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html. and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.'

Office of School Nutrition • TPS Administration Building • 1240 Foster Ave • Nashville, TN 37243
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