

POLICY GUIDE

OPERATIONS

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Unpaid Meal Charges/Outstanding Food Service
Charges

The Board of Education understands a student may forget to bring breakfast or lunch, as applicable, or money to purchase breakfast or lunch to school on a school day. When this happens, the food service program will provide a student a breakfast and/or lunch with an expectation payment will be made the next school day or shortly thereafter. However, there may be circumstances when payment is not made and a student's school breakfast and/or lunch bill is in arrears. The school district will manage a student's breakfast or lunch bill that is in arrears in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21 and this Policy.

In the event a paid or reduced meal status student's school lunch and/or breakfast bill is in arrears in excess of \$13.00, the student will continue to receive lunch and/or breakfast and their account will be charged accordingly. The Food Service Coordinator or designee shall contact the student's parent to provide notice of the amount in arrears and shall provide the parent a period of ten school days to pay the full amount due. If the student's parent does not make full payment to the food service program by the end of the ten school days, the Food Service Coordinator or designee shall again contact the student's parent to provide a second notice that their child's breakfast or lunch bill is in arrears.

For high school students, if payment in full is not made within one week from the date of the second notice, the student will not be served breakfast or lunch, as applicable, without payment for that day's breakfast or lunch beginning one week from the date of the second notice.

For elementary and middle school students, if payment in full is not made within two weeks from the date of the second notice, the student will be provided an alternate lunch, beginning two weeks from the date of the second notice. This alternate lunch will consist of a cheese sandwich or the equivalent, and a milk. The student's account will be charged \$1.00 for each alternate meal served to the student.

A parent who has received a second notice their child's lunch and/or breakfast bill is in arrears and who has not made payment in full within one week (high school students) or two weeks (elementary and middle school students) from the date of the second notice will be requested to meet with the Principal or designee to discuss and resolve the matter.



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A parent's refusal to meet or take other steps to resolve the matter may be indicative of more serious issues in the family or household. In these situations, the Principal or designee shall consult with and seek necessary services from both the County Board of Social Services and the Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency, as appropriate.

When a parent's routine failure to provide breakfast and/or lunch is reasonably suspected to be indicative of child abuse or neglect, the Principal or designee shall immediately report such suspicion to the Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency as required in N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.10. Such reporting shall not be delayed to accommodate a parent's meeting with the Principal or designee.

If the student's breakfast and/or lunch bill is in arrears, but the student has the money to purchase breakfast or lunch, the student will be provided breakfast and/or lunch and the food service program will not use the student's money to repay previously unpaid charges if the student intended to use the money to purchase that day's meal.

The food service program will prevent the overt identification of children through the method of payment used to purchase a meal and whose breakfast and/or lunch bill is in arrears. The alternate meal referred to above shall be offered to all students.

In accordance with the provisions of the United States Department of Agriculture, this Policy shall be provided in writing to all households at the start of each school year and to households transferring to the school or school district during the school year. The school district may post this Policy on the school or school district's website provided there is a method in place to ensure this Policy reaches all households, particularly those households without access to a computer or the Internet.

This Policy shall also be provided to all school and food service staff responsible for the enforcement of this Policy, including school administrators to ensure this Policy is supported.

The food service program will comply with all meal charge policy requirements of the United States and New Jersey Department of Agriculture and N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21.

N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21

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