**Cumberland County Schools Meal Charge Administrative Procedure**

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2023

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 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 that 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 packets that are given to each student at the start of each school year. Families of transfer students (during the year) will receive a written copy of the district-wide charge administrative procedure with the enrollment packet.

**Local Charge Administrative Procedure – Student Fees & Fines (Policy Reference: 6.709)**

Cumberland County School Nutrition believes in the importance of providing healthy nutritious meals for our students. Just as with any services, there is an expense involved with every meal that we provide. Our county has a very high population of free and reduced students and our free and reduced onboarding process functions extremely well. The guidelines outlined in this procedure have been developed to protect and nurture the children of our school system. While it would be best if all meals for all students were paid in full, that is simply not possible, although we are moving towards that goal. We must set standards and procedures to address high student cafeteria charges.

**General**

Students who are unable to pay for their meals at the time of the meal service are allowed to charge:

* Breakfast
* Lunch

Students charging for breakfast and/or lunch will receive normal reimbursable meals. A la cart items are never allowed to be charged.

**Charge Limits and Household Notification**

All students will be given a verbal reminder regarding low balances. Students will also be given a verbal reminder of a negative balance after the first meal by the cashier. Additionally, negative balance notices will be sent out by the Cumberland County School Nutrition Program via. charge letter, phone, and email. The parents will be contacted by a school district representative to notify them of the negative balance and include education/assistance on the free and reduced school lunch forms and process.

The café manager will provide a list of all negative balances to the principal or designee at least weekly.

**Alternate meals**

No alternate meals will be given.

**Delinquent Debt**

Delinquent debt is defined as overdue unpaid meal charges that are considered collectible, with efforts being made to collect them. The debt may remain on the accounting documents until it is either collected or determined to be uncollectable. The debt may be carried over at the end of the school year (beyond June 30). Before the SFA requests payment of the outstanding debt, the household’s debt will be delinquent until it is deemed by the Director of Schools that it be classified as bad debt. Collection attempts will continue as long as the debt is deemed delinquent as a joint effort of the School Cafeteria Manager, the School Office Administrative Staff, the Cumberland County School Nutrition Office, and the Director of Schools’ Office. **Furthermore, all unpaid charge accounts could be turned over to the Department of Children’s Services, the BOE Attorney, and collections.**

**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 Kathy Hamby at khamby@ccschools.k12tn.net or

931-484-6722 for establishing a repayment plan.

**Bad Debt**

Bad debt is determined to be uncollectable when further collection efforts for delinquent debt are deemed useless or too costly. Delinquent debt will be considered as bad debt as deemed by the Director of Schools.

* 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 debt must be written off as an operating loss as deemed by the Director of Schools; the nonprofit school food service account (NSFSA) resources may not be used to cover the costs related to the bad debt. These funds may come from the school district’s general fund, school or community organizations, or any other non-federal sources.
* Once delinquent meal charges are converted to bad debt, records relating to those charges must be maintained according to record retention requirements in 7 CFR 210.9(b)(17) and 7 CFR 210.15(b).

**Additional Resources**

Families may find assistance with applying for free or reduced-price school meals by contactingKathy Hamby, School Nutrition District Supervisor at khamby@ccschools.k12tn.net or 931-484-6722.