

Regulation

Food Services Management - School Nutrition Charges

Descriptor Code: EE-R

Meal Charge Policy

The Pickens County School Administration has adopted a charge policy that includes limited charge privileges. **If a student arrives at school without money they are allowed to charge meals up to \$12.00.** This benefit is to allow time for notification of parents to provide the needed funds to cover meals.

- Charges are not allowed for A la carte or extra items by any student or adult customer.
- A la carte or extra items cannot be purchased if the customer owes a charge.
- Adults (district employees) will be allowed to charge a maximum of one day's meal cost to their account. (\$6.35 total: breakfast \$2.35 + lunch \$4.00) All charges must be paid in full on or before the 5th day of the following month.
- Visitors may not charge.
- **Charges will not be allowed during the last two weeks of school.**

Parental Notification

- Student meal account notices for all students with a delinquent meal balance will be generated weekly and sent to households through Infinite Campus messaging.
- Once the charge limit has been met, the parent/guardian will be notified by the school nutrition manager via phone call.
- Principals will be provided the list of student charge balances monthly.
- If parents/guardians do not pay for student meals and do not send a lunch, they will be contacted by the School Nutrition County office to work out a payment plan.
- If additional action is required, the parent/guardian will be referred to the principal. At the principal's discretion further referral may be made to a school social worker.
- School Nutrition may seek reimbursement for excessive funds owed through all legal means including a collection agency.

To assist parents, student account balances can be monitored at any time through our online payment program **mypaymentsplus.com**. This service can be used regardless of whether you use the online funding option or send cash or checks directly to the school. We highly recommend you set a low balance alert (\$5 or higher is suggested) to receive an email when funds are low.

If parents/guardians are experiencing financial hardships it is important that they notify the school nutrition director at 706-253-1700 or the principal so that a free/reduced meal application can be completed or other help offered.

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It is the goal of the School Nutrition Program (SNP) to eliminate unpaid charges at the end of each academic year. However unpaid student meal charges will be carried over at the end of the school year as a delinquent debt and SNP staff will continue collection efforts into the next school year.

Delinquent charges will be considered bad debt when a child withdraws from Pickens County School System without clearing charges from his/her school meal account. Bad debts will be paid by the school that the student withdraws from by June 30 following the end of each school year. The SNP will print a list of inactive students by school that have negative balances and provide to the principal at each school.

Alternate Meals

Alternate Meals Pilot Program to start January 4, 2024

The point of service will be moved to the beginning of the serving line at 2 schools, Jasper MS and Pickens HS in January. This helps the cashier determine which children, if any, are unable to pay for their meal, and allows the cashier to address the issue discretely before the child has selected a meal. Students that have exceeded the charge limit and are without sufficient funds to cover a lunch meal purchase will be offered an alternative meal at lunch for a limited time until the balance owed is paid. The courtesy alternate meal will consist of a cheese sandwich and milk or juice.

Students need to have funds to pay for breakfast at school or eat breakfast before arriving at school. We will not offer an alternative meal at breakfast.

Beginning SY 2024-2025: Alternative meals will be provided to students whose accounts have not been cleared from a previous school year.