

Champion Schools recognizes the important link between proper nutrition and academic success. The purpose of this policy is to establish a procedure for serving meals when students do not have money to pay, preventing unpaid balances, and ensuring eligible children are certified for free and reduced-price school meals.

Meal charges:

Because hunger is an impediment to learning, breakfast and lunch are available everyday. No student eligible for free or reduced-priced meals will be denied a reimbursable meal for any reason. Non-eligible students may have no more than negative balance of \$30 or be on a payment plan. All non-eligible students will be charged for their meal.

All non-eligible students are allowed to charge their meals.

Preventing unpaid meal charges:

- Households are made aware of the school's participation in the National School Lunch Program and encouraged to apply upon enrollment and at the start of each school year.
- Meal applications are made available prior to the start of the school year, throughout the school year, and included in all new enrollment packets. They are also available online at www.schooloperations.org and may be completed at any time.
- All program materials are available in both English and Spanish as well as other languages upon request.
- State data is promptly utilized certify eligible children without an application.
- Parents and/or guardians may view their child's meal balance and may make payments at any time by visiting www.schooloperations.org.
- Households may pay for meals in advance, online, or in person at the school office.
- Households are informed of negative account balances and the potential to accrue meal debt by contacting the households directly and notifying parents of balances on a regular basis.

Collecting unpaid meal debt:

Communication regarding unpaid meal debt shall focus primarily on parents or guardians in the household responsible for providing funds for meal purchases. Meal balances may be requested at any time by asking the office staff.

Prior to contacting households regarding unpaid meal debt, the school nutrition staff shall ensure that the student is not participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, or other federal programs, which would confer categorical eligibility for free school meals, or is not homeless, migrant, or in foster care, and would allow them to be certified without an application.

Any household with a negative school lunch account balance shall be contacted immediately by school nutrition staff by email, phone, or letter home to provide information on how to apply for free or reduced-price school meals or to add funds to the school nutrition account.

For households that cannot afford to pay their school meal charges, the school nutrition department will work with them to establish a payment plan. Households that are subsequently certified for free school meals at a point later in the school year shall not be required to repay school meal debt accrued prior to the certification date of the application. Households that are subsequently certified for Reduced price school meals, prior meal debt will be calculated at the reduced-price rate for which repayment will be required for any school meal debt accrued prior to the certification date of the application.

Carry-over unpaid meal debt:

Negative balances must be cleared up before the end of the school year or before the release of school records. Notices will continue until the debt has been paid. All positive/negative balances at the end of the school year will carry over to the next school year.