

Business/Non-Instructional Operations

Food Service

Permissible Student Charge of Meals

The goal of the food service program is to provide students with nutritious foods that will enhance learning. The school nutrition program is an essential part of the education system and by providing good-tasting, nutritious meals in pleasant surroundings, we are helping to teach students the value of good nutrition.

The Board of Education (Board) has an agreement with the Connecticut State Department of Education to participate in one or more school Child Nutrition Programs and accepts full responsibility for adhering to the federal and state guidelines and regulations pertaining to these school Child Nutrition Programs. The Board also accepts full responsibility for providing free, reduced price and regular priced meals to elementary and secondary students enrolled in the District's schools. Meals are planned to meet the specified nutrient standards outlined by the United States Department of Agriculture for children based on their age or grade group.

Although not required by law, because of the District's participation in the Child Nutrition Programs, the Board approves the establishment of a system to allow a student to charge a meal.

Charging is not encouraged by the Board, but on those occasions that a student does not have money, he/she will be permitted to charge up to thirty (30) meals.

After the thirtieth (30th) meal, the student will not be allowed to charge any further meals and will not be served meals until their balance is cleared. If a student's unpaid meal charges equal or exceed the cost of thirty (30) meals, the Board will refer the parent or guardian to the district's designated McKinney-Vento Act Homeless Education Liaison. The Board realizes that funds from the non-profit school food service account, according to federal regulations cannot be used to cover the cost of charged meals that have not been paid.

In the event of hardship situations, parents or guardians shall contact the Food Service Director or Building Principal to discuss an application for free or reduced price meals.

No charging is allowed for adult meals.

The District uses an automated prepayment system, which allows parents/guardians to view their child's meal account balance and purchases, receive low balance notifications, as well as make deposits to their child's school meal account.

Federal funds are intended to subsidize the meals of children and may not be used to subsidize meals for adults (teachers, staff and visitors).

Business/Non-Instructional Operations

Food Service

Permissible Student Charge of Meals (continued)

C.G.S. Section 10-215(c) allows a local or regional board of education to accept gifts, donations or grants from any public or private sources for the purpose of paying any unpaid charges for school lunches, breakfasts or other meal services.

This policy shall be placed on the District’s website, on the website of each school, and published at the beginning of each school year at the time information is distributed regarding free and reduced price meals.

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to develop regulations which address meal charging, collection of repayments and communication of the policy.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-215 Lunches, breakfasts and other feeding programs for public school children and employees.

10-215a Nonpublic school and nonprofit agency participation in feeding programs.

10-215b Duties of State Board of Education re feeding programs.

State Board of Education Regulations

Operational Memorandum #19-10, State of Connecticut, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

“Unallowable Charges to No-profit School Food Service Accounts and the Serving of Meals to No-paying Full and Reduced Price Students”

National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program; Competitive Foods. (7 CFR Parts 210 and 220, Federal Register, Vol 45 No. 20, Tuesday, January 29, 1980, pp 6758-6772

Policy adopted: June 20, 2017
Policy revised: November 12, 2021
Policy revised: December 13, 2022

PUTNAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Putnam, Connecticut

Business/Non-Instructional Operations

Food Service

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The Board of Education (Board) has an agreement with the Connecticut State Department of Education to participate in one or more school Child Nutrition Programs and accepts full responsibility for adhering to the federal and state guidelines and regulations pertaining to these school Child Nutrition Programs. The Board also accepts full responsibility for providing free, reduced price and regular priced meals to elementary and secondary students enrolled in the District's schools. Meals are planned to meet the specified nutrient standards outlined by the United States Department of Agriculture for children based on their age or grade group.

The Board's procedures regarding meal charging are as follows:

1. Food Service Department staff will inform students verbally when they have a low account balance. A-la-carte menu items or more than one meal during the same meal service period cannot be charged.
2. Students may charge up to thirty (30) reimbursable meals.
3. After students have surpassed the limit of thirty (30) charged meals, the food Service Director or designee will refer the matter to the Principal or designee (e.g. social worker) and will refer the parent or guardian to the district's designated McKinney-Vento Act Homeless Education Liaison.

Parents will also be provided with the following:

- a. contact information for local food pantries;
- b. a free or reduced-price meal application including information regarding the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), such as the Connecticut State Department of Education's *Addendum C: Information on the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*;
- c. a link to the Town's website listing any community services available to the residents of the Town; and
- d. a link to the District's website listing services available to families

Business/Non-Instructional Operations

Food Service

Permissible Student Charge of Meals (continued)

4. Collection of Account Balances

a. Elementary School

Parents/Guardians of elementary school students who charge a meal will be notified by a letter indicating their child has received a charged meal. Letters will be given to the student by his/her classroom teacher so they may be taken home with Friday backpack. The Food Service Director or designee will follow up with the parent/guardian via a phone call, text message or an email about the account balance. Communication will continue weekly until account balances are cleared.

b. Middle School

Parents/Guardians will be notified by letter (via mail or email) about the account balance. The Food Service Director or designee will follow up with the parent/guardian via a phone call, text message or an email about the account balance. Communication will continue weekly until account balances are cleared.

c. High School

Parents/Guardians will be notified by phone or email about the account balance. The Food Service Director or designee will follow up with the parent/guardian via a phone call, text message or an email about the account balance. Communication will continue weekly until account balances are cleared.

Delinquent Debt

Unpaid meal charges, like any other money owed to the nonprofit school food service account (NSFSA), are considered “delinquent debt” when payment is overdue, as defined by state or local policies. Effective with school year, 2017-18, the Connecticut State Department of Education requires that the household pays all delinquent student debts no later than June 30th to ensure that students’ accounts are closed. These student meal accounts must be at a zero balance for the next school year.

Any delinquent debts that have not been recovered by June 30th will be considered “bad debt.” Records relating to those charges must be maintained in accordance with the records retention requirements in 7 CFR 210.9(b) (17) and 7 CFR 210.15(b).

The Board of Education shall be notified annually in June of delinquent debt associated with the nonprofit school food service account (NSFSA).

This regulation shall be placed on the District’s website, on the website of each school, and published at the beginning of each school year at the time information is distributed regarding free and reduced price meals.

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