

CHARTIERS-HOUSTON SCHOOL DISTRICT

Policy No.: 650

**POLICY
GUIDE**

Section: STUDENTS

Title: STUDENT MEALS

Adopted: August 20, 2001

Revision Adopted: August 20,
2007; May 21, 2018

POLICY NO. 650

STUDENT MEALS - FREE AND REDUCED LUNCHEES AND PAYMENT POLICIES

1. PURPOSE

To ensure that our Food Service Department has a policy in place to communicate consistent guidelines and procedures to Parents/Guardians, students and staff. The Charters-Houston School District offers the National School Breakfast and Lunch programs for all of its elementary school students in accordance with the Healthy Hunger - Free Kids Act of 2010 and Act 55 of 2017, 24 P.S. Section 13-1337. The School District also operates a school lunch program for its junior and senior high school students. In accordance with Federal Law, State law, and USDA Policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

2. AUTHORITY

The Charters-Houston School Board authorized the implementation and administration of the student meals policy in accordance with the guidelines set forth herein, and authorizes and directs the Administration to enforce the policy.

3. DEFINITIONS

Student Account - Individual account assigned to each student in the Charters-Houston School District for accounting purposes for the purchase of meals and ala carte food items.

Meal - Breakfast or lunch provided by the Charters-Houston School District for all students. Milk is offered to students with breakfast and lunch meals.

Snacks or ala Carte Item - All food items other than meals, available for sale in the Charters-Houston School District cafeterias.

Bad Debt - Unpaid meal charges totaling \$100 or more, or unpaid charges of students who have been withdrawn from the School District and whose Parents/Guardians are not complying with an agreed upon payment plan.

Delinquent Debts - unpaid meal charges when payment is overdue. The debt is considered delinquent as long as efforts are being made to collect it.

4. FREE AND REDUCED MEALS

- Meals are available and provided for families who meet the federal guidelines.
- All children receiving food stamp benefits are eligible for free meals. If a Parent/Guardian received a Notice of Direct Certification Letter for free meals from the School District, he/she does not need to complete a new application to participate in the free and reduced lunch program.
- Free and Reduced Applications will be mailed to elementary student families every August before school begins. One application is to be used for all students in the household.
- Newly enrolled students will receive an information packet with a free and reduced application and a copy of this policy. This policy will also be posted on the School District's cafeteria bulletin boards, in Student Handbooks and at the Food Service Department Web Page at **www.Ch bucs.K12.Pa.Us**. All students will receive a copy of this policy at the beginning of each school year.
- Applications can be dropped off in School District offices. Students may also return completed applications in a sealed envelope to their homeroom teachers. Applications also can be mailed to the Chartiers-Houston High School Food Service Dept., 2050 West Pike St. Houston Pa.15342
- Free and reduced meals can also be applied for on line at **www.compass.state.pa.us**. Parents/Guardians may apply for free and reduced meals at any time during the school year.
- Parents/Guardians of new kindergarten students can complete an application at the kindergarten orientation and hand-deliver it to the Food Service Director or Elementary Office to ensure that the application is approved before school begins.
- The School District cannot approve an application that is not complete, and is not responsible for applications that do not reach the School District for approval. All applications are reviewed in the order that we receive them. If a Parent/Guardian does not hear from the School District in writing or by phone within 15 days after submitting the application, he/she is urged to please contact the Food Service Director.
- Parents/Guardians will be notified by mail with a letter relating to their child/children's eligibility. Parents/Guardians should contact the Food

Service Director 724-745-3350 Ext. 204 if their child/children's name/s are not on the School District's approval letter, or if there are any other concerns.

- Children who were approved for participation in the Program in the previous year, will begin each year with the previous year's approved application. However, a new application must be completed and on file each year, to allow the children to continue to receive free or reduced meals. Parents/Guardians are advised that after the first 30 serving days a child will be charged for meals if the School District does not have a new approved application on file.
- Monthly menus will be sent home with the elementary students and posted on the Food Service Department's web page, on bulletin boards and in classrooms. The ala carte / meal price list can also be viewed on the web page, and will be posted in the cafeterias.
- The School District shall make appropriate food service meal accommodations to students with a disability or a special dietary need such as a severe allergy. Parents/Guardians must contact the Food Service Director for this service.

5. COMPUTERIZED POINT OF SALE DEBIT SYSTEM

- Individual accounts will be assigned to each student for accounting purposes for the purchase of meals and ala carte food items.
- All students will be assigned a personal identification number (PIN) and a personal picture for identification. Students access their accounts by providing their PIN number to the cafeteria cash register attendant.
- Students may apply cash or check to their cafeteria accounts during breakfast or lunch for all food purchases. A \$20.00 fee will be charged to a student's account for non-sufficient fund checks.
- Parents/Guardians are encouraged to set up student cafeteria accounts at **myschoolbucks.com**. This site provides convenience and control of a student's spending. At this site Parents/Guardians can deposit funds for a small charge and view students' balance and purchases. This site is user friendly, secure and provides tech support at 1-855-832-5226. Parents/Guardians will need their student's pin number to set up an account.
- Upon request of a Parent/Guardian, an individual participation report will be generated by the Food Service Director and mailed or sent home with the student. This report reflects all activity on the student's account.

- Student account balances, both positive and negative, are maintained on record at the end of the school year and carried over as the beginning balance for the next year.
- Account balances will only be refunded upon parental request when a student leaves the School District permanently. Positive balances may be transferred to another student's account upon written Parental/Guardian request to the Food Service Director.

6. CHARGING OF MEALS AND ALA CARTE FOOD ITEMS

- Any student who requests a school meal will be provided one regardless of whether the student has money to pay.
- A student who cannot pay for a school meal or who owes money will not be publicly identified or stigmatized.
- A student who cannot pay for a school meal will not be required to perform chores or other work to pay for school meals.
- Communications regarding money owed by a student for school meals will be made to the Parent/Guardian and not the student.
- A student will not be required to discard a school meal after it was served, due to the student's inability to pay for the meal, or because of the amount of money owed by the student for prior school meals.
- The School District will only withhold meals from a student if the Food Service Director receives a prior written direction from a Parent or Guardian specifically authorizing the School District to do so. Contact the Food Service Director to provide this directive. The School District will not accept phone calls for this procedure; it must be written documentation and filed on record. If a Parent or Guardian chooses this option, food can be removed from the student by the cashier at the register.
- Students are not permitted to charge ala carte snack items or second meals. Students must have funds for ala carte purchases; otherwise, ala carte items will be removed from the student tray by the cashier, in a respectful manner.

7. RECOVERY OF THE PRICE OF OVERCHARGED MEALS

- When a student owes \$ 5.00 or more, a report of student account balance letter will be mailed to the Parent/Guardian at the address on file. The

School District will mail delinquent letters approximately every two weeks.

- When a student owes over \$100.00 the Parent/Guardian will receive a letter from the School District explaining its collection procedures. Principals will also make attempts to reach Parents/Guardians by phone throughout the year.
- All student accounts are required to be paid in full by the end of June each school year.
- If a Parent or Guardian is having problems paying for meal charges, the School District will make every effort to work with the family to establish a payment plan. Please contact the Food Service Director for a payment plan.
- All delinquent charges will continue to accrue to the student school meal account during the school year if the debt has not been paid.
- Any senior student who has a negative balance, will not receive a diploma at graduation; the diploma will be held until the delinquent balance is paid in full.
- Failure to pay for meals owing \$100.00 or more will be considered bad debts as of June of each year. They will result in civil action by the School District for collection of outstanding balance plus court costs in July of each year. This includes families who have moved out of our School District.
- If the School District receives funds donated in general to the Food Service Program, or specifically to defray the cost of meals to students, these funds will be applied to individual delinquent student accounts, beginning with the longest outstanding delinquencies. Donations can be made by contacting the Business Manager. Any family that has moved out of the School District and has not requested a refund of their child's account by the end of the current school year, will be considered as having donated the balance, which will be applied to a delinquent student account as set forth herein.