



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

Procedures for Students without Funds for Lunch

5080
Procedure No.
August 14, 2017
Date

- I. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this administrative procedure is to provide options for students without funds for school meals. Prince George’s County Public Schools (PGCPS) intends to treat all students with dignity and respect and prevent any embarrassment in the lunch line due to lack of funds in student’s meal account while promoting parental responsibility for meal payments.

- II. **BACKGROUND:** Students are expected to provide payment in cash or pay in advance for all meals and food purchases. Federal reimbursement for meals served cannot be used to offset the cost of unpaid meals. Therefore, we encourage parents and guardians to maintain their student’s account throughout the year to prevent the student from receiving an alternate meal. A notification will be provided annually to parents notifying them of this Procedure (see Attachment 1).

Federal regulations require that all students purchasing meals must pass through a Point of Sale, using a nondiscriminatory procedure. Food Service must account for and claim meals for reimbursement by eligibility category. The Department of Food & Nutrition Services accounting procedures do not permit charging meals.

The district uses a computer system for student meal purchases. Each student is assigned a personal identification number (PIN). All students have their own account and money may be deposited into the account daily, weekly or monthly for prepayment of meals. Parents may use MySchoolBucks online payment service, send or bring cash to the cafeteria before lunch. MySchoolBucks allows parents to:

- Make payments quickly using a credit or debit card (there is a convenience fee for the service);
- Create a free account to view balances and items purchased;
- To set and receive low balance notifications; and
- Set limits to automatically replenish student account when balance is low.

When a student repeatedly comes to school without a lunch from home or funds to purchase a meal, school administrators are encouraged to follow the procedures below under IV.C.



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V. **PROCEDURES:**

Staff Responsibilities

A. Students Eligible for Free and Reduced-price meals

1. Free meal status allows a student to receive one free breakfast and lunch every day.
2. Reduced-price meal status allows students in all grade levels (K-12) to receive one reduced-price breakfast and lunch daily.

B. All Other Students

These procedures apply to lunch. No alternate meal will be provided for breakfast.

1. Elementary Students

- i. Cashiers will verbally remind students to bring money when balances are low.
- ii. Weekly, the cafeteria manager will print low balance reports and letters to be given to teachers to send home with students.
- iii. Principals must establish and maintain a principal loan account to reimburse Food & Nutrition Services for meals provided to students without funds.

Meal Vouchers:

- iv. School administration will extend credit to elementary students without lunch money for up to three meals.
- v. A student who has received a meal may not purchase “a la carte” snacks.
- vi. Each morning, the cafeteria manager will provide a list of students without funds to the school office.
- vii. Students without funds will receive a meal voucher from the office to receive a meal that will be charged to the principal account.



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- viii. A phone call or a charge letter should be sent home with the student notifying the parent a meal was charged to the principal's account and payment should be made to the cafeteria or school office the next day.
- ix. Cafeteria staff will provide the administration with a Principal Loan Account statement daily. This report will detail repayment and any charges against the account.
- x. After three (3) days of non-payment, the student will receive an approved alternate meal for lunch until the unpaid balance is paid.

Alternate Meals:

- xi. School administrators along with food service staff will identify student (s) who will receive the alternate meal prior to lunch to avoid the student going through the serving line.
- xii. The alternate meal will be distributed to the student before lunch to avoid the student going through the serving line. The meal will consist of a cheese stick, crackers, fruit/vegetable and milk.
- xiii. Cashiers will no longer take a tray from a student.
- xiv. Food Services will bill the school administration for the cost of the alternate meal and any reimbursable meals.
- xv. Payment must be received to replenish the principal's account before other meals can be charged. If there are no funds in the principal account, the student will receive the alternate meal.
- xvi. It is the school's responsibility to replenish the principal's account when the balance is low.

2. Middle School Students

- i. Middle school students are expected to remain aware of their meal count balance.



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- ii. Cashiers will remind students daily when their account is low.
- iii. Students should call parents to add money to their account or bring money to school.
- iv. Principals must establish a principal's lunch loan account to reimburse Food & Nutrition Services for a reimbursable meal only.

Meal Vouchers:

- v. School administration will extend a meal to middle school students without lunch money for up to three meals.
- vi. School administration will issue a meal voucher from the office to charge the meal to the principal's account.
- vii. Payment must be received by the cafeteria or office before other meals can be charged to the principal account
- viii. Cafeteria staff will provide the administration with a Principal Loan Account statement daily. This report will detail repayment and any charges against the account.
- ix. A student who has received a meal may not purchase "a la carte" snacks.
- x. It is the school's responsibility to replenish the principal's account.
- xi. Cashiers will not take a tray from a student.

Alternate Meals:

- xii. School administrators along with food service staff will identify student (s) who will receive the alternate meal prior to lunch.
- xiii. The alternate meal will be distributed to the student before lunch to avoid the student going through the serving line. The meal will consist of a cheese stick, crackers, fruit/vegetable and milk.



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- xiv. Food Services will bill school administration for the cost of the alternate meal and any reimbursable meal.

3. High School

- i. High school students are expected to remain aware of their account balance.
- ii. Cashiers will remind students daily when their account is low.
- iii. High school students are allowed to charge one meal. Payment must be received the next day.
- iv. A student who has charged a meal may not purchase “a la carte” snacks.

Alternate Meal:

- v. If the charges are not paid, the student will be provided with the alternate meal for high school students. The meal will consist of a cheese sandwich and milk.
- vi. Food service staff will provide a list of students with meal charges to the administration.
- vii. Food Service will bill school administration for the cost of the alternate meal and any reimbursable meal.
- viii. Students may pay for meals in advance.

C. When a student repeatedly comes to school without a lunch from home or funds to purchase a meal, school administrators should first contact the parent or guardian to complete a meal benefit application to determine if the family is eligible for meal benefits. If for any reason, the parent refuses to complete an application and the principal is aware that the student is eligible for free or reduced-price meal, the principal should contact the Department of Food & Nutrition Services.

D. The principal or designee will coordinate communications with the parents/guardians to resolve unpaid meal charges. Outstanding meal charges could result in withholding of report cards and student records.



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E. If school administration suspects that a student may be abusing the procedure, written notification will be sent to the parent /guardian that if the student continues the behavior, the student will not be allowed to receive a meal.

F. Parental Notification

The USDA requires annual notification to parents/guardians. The principal of each school will provide notice to parents/guardians on an annual basis at the start of the school year, outlining the requirements of this procedure (see Attachment 1). This procedure shall be published in appropriate school based publications and accessible for viewing on the PGCPS website.

- VI. **RELATED PROCEDURES:** None.
- VII. **MAINTENANCE AND UPDATE OF THESE PROCEDURES:** These procedures originate with the Department of Food and Nutrition Services and will be updated as needed.
- VIII. **CANCELLATIONS AND SUPERSEDURES:** None. This is a new procedure.
- IX. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** August 14, 2017

Attachment:

Parental Notification for Students without Funds for School meals