



Wicomico County Board of Education

Unpaid School Meal Charges Policy

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set expectations regarding the collection of unpaid school meal charges in compliance with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) regulations.

II. Policy

- A. Students desiring a meal at any of Wicomico County Public Schools, and who are unable to pay at meal time, will be provided a meal and grace period by which to satisfy the debt before an alternative meal is substituted. Elementary and Secondary students may have up to three (3) school days of unpaid meal charges before receiving an alternative meal.
- B. Notifications of unpaid meal charges will be communicated as follows:
 1. Parents will be notified discreetly via US Mail, telephone, secured electronic notice, or unmarked sealed envelope sent home with the student. This notification will also include information on how to apply for free or reduced meals.
 2. As appropriate, students will be discreetly told of a low or negative balance on their account by an administrator or Food Services worker.
- C. Students who have unpaid meal charges after the grace period, will thereafter, be offered an alternative meal that meets the USDA guidelines. This alternative meal will be offered until one or both of the following conditions have been met:
 1. The unpaid meals have been paid and the account brought current; or
 2. An application for free or reduced meals has been approved.
- D. The application for free or reduced meals must be renewed annually by a student's parent or guardian.
 1. Those students who have received free or reduced meals in the previous school year, will receive a grace period of thirty (30) school days by which to submit a new free or reduced meal application.
 2. Once the application has been processed, the student's new meal eligibility status will take effect.

Related Documents:

- Overcoming the Unpaid Meal Challenge: Proven Strategies from our Nation's Schools, published by the USDA, 06/16/2016.

Approval Status

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