

POLICY

UNPAID MEAL CHARGES/OUTSTANDING FOOD SERVICE CHARGES (M)

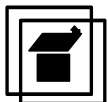
8550 UNPAID MEAL CHARGES/OUTSTANDING FOOD SERVICE CHARGES (M)

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The Board of Education understands a student may forget to bring breakfast or lunch (meal), as applicable, or ~~money funds~~ to purchase ~~breakfast or lunch~~ a meal to school on a school day. ~~When this happens~~ In this circumstance, the food service program will provide the student a meal and will inform the Principal or designee. ~~with breakfast or lunch with an expectation payment will be made the next school day or shortly thereafter. The Principal or designee will contact the student's parent/guardian to provide notice of an outstanding meal bill and will provide the parent/guardian with a period of ten school days to pay the amount due. If the student's parent/guardian has not made full payment by the end of the ten school days, the Principal or designee shall again contact the parent/guardian with a second notice informing the parent/guardian of any action to be taken by the school district in response to a student's breakfast or school lunch bill being in arrears. Such action may include denying the student school breakfast or lunch. However, there may be circumstances when payment is not made and a student's school breakfast/lunch bill is in arrears. Despite such arrears, the Board of Education affirms its commitment to provide affected students with breakfast or lunch. The A school district shall report at least biannually to the New Jersey Department of Agriculture the number of students who are denied school breakfast or school lunch will manage a student's breakfast or lunch bill that is in arrears in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21a and this Policy.~~

The school district or vendor on behalf of the district shall not:

1. Publicly identify or stigmatize a student who cannot pay for a meal or whose school meal bill is in arrears. (For example, by requiring the student to sit at a separate table or wear a wristband, hand stamp, or identifying mark or by serving the student an alternative meal);
2. Require a student who cannot pay for a school meal or whose school meal bill is in arrears to do chores or other work to pay for the school meal; or
3. Require a student to discard a school meal after it has been served because of the student's inability to pay for a school meal or because money is owed for previously provided meals.
4. Prevent a student from attending any school events or field trips due to an overdrawn lunch account; or
5. Withhold a diploma or transcript due to an overdrawn lunch account.



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If a parent/guardian student owes money for the equivalent of five or more school meals at any time during the school year, the Principal or designee shall:

1. Determine if the student is eligible for a free or reduced-price school meal;
2. Make at least two attempts, not including the application or instructions provided to the parent/guardian each school year pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21b., to contact the student's parent/guardian and have the parent/guardian fill out an application for the school lunch program and school breakfast program; and
3. Contact the student's parent/guardian to offer assistance with the application for the school lunch and school breakfast program; determine if there are other issues within the household that have caused the child to have insufficient funds to purchase a school breakfast or school lunch; and offer any other appropriate assistance.

The school district shall direct communications about a student's school meal bill being in arrears to the parent/guardian and not the student. The school district's contact with the parent/guardian may be via email or telephone call. Nothing in N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21 shall prohibit the school district from sending a student home with a letter addressed to a parent/guardian in a sealed envelope.

If the student's meal bill is in arrears, but the student has the money to purchase a meal on a subsequent school day, the student will be provided a meal with payment and the food service program will not use the student's payment to repay previously unpaid charges if the student intended to use the money to purchase that school day's meal.

A parent/guardian who has received a second notice their child's meal bill is in arrears and who has not made payment in full within one week from the date of the second notice will be requested to meet with the Principal or designee to discuss and resolve the matter.

A parent's/guardian's refusal to meet with the Principal or designee or take other steps to resolve the matter may be indicative of more serious issues in the family or household. However, when a parent's/guardian's routine failure to provide breakfast or lunch is reasonably suspected to be indicative of child abuse or neglect, the Principal or designee shall immediately report such suspicion to the Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency as required in N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.10. Such reporting shall not be delayed to accommodate a parent's/guardian's meeting with the Principal or designee. In the event a student's school lunch or breakfast bill is in the arrears, the Principal or designee shall use all available means to contact the student's



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parent/guardian to provide notice of the amount in arrears and shall provide the parent/guardian a period of ten school days to establish a payment plan. If the principal or designee suspects or has reason to believe that the family may be facing financial issues affecting its ability to pay the bills in question, the Principal or designee shall advise the parent/guardian of potential community resources. If the student's parent/guardian does not respond to the Principal or designee by the end of ten school days, the Principal or designee shall again contact the student's parent/guardian to provide a second notice. If the required payments under the payment plan have not been made, the student will be provided a meal lunch that will contain the essentials in balanced nutritional selections as prescribed by the Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, New Jersey Department of Agriculture beginning the eighth calendar day from the date of the second notice. A parent/guardian who has received a second notice their child's lunch or breakfast bill is in arrears and who has not made payment in full within one week from the date of the second notice will be requested to meet with the Principal or designee to discuss and resolve the matter. Students receiving free meals will not never be denied a meal even if they accrued a negative balance from other purchases in the cafeteria.

In accordance with N.J.S.A 18A:33-21b., at the beginning of each school year, and upon initial enrollment in the case of a student enrolling during the school year, the school district shall provide to the parent/guardian of each student:

1. Information on the National School Lunch Program and the Federal School Breakfast Program;
2. An application to apply for the school lunch and school breakfast programs and instructions for completing the application; and
3. Information on the rights of students and their families under N.J.S.A. 18A:22-21 et seq.

The school district may provide the application and information electronically through the means by which the school district communicates with parents/guardians electronically. The application and information shall be in a language the parent/guardian understands.

The school district's liaison for the education of homeless children shall coordinate with school district personnel to ensure that a homeless student receives free school meals and is monitored according to the school district policies pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21c.



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The school district may post this Policy on the school district's website provided there is a method in place to ensure this Policy reaches all households without access to a computer or the Internet.

N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21; 18A:33-21a.; 18A:33-21b.; 18A:33-21c.

~~In the event a student's school lunch or breakfast bill is in arrears, the Principal or designee shall use all available means to contact the student's parent to provide notice of the amount in arrears and shall provide the parent a period of ten school days to establish a payment plan. If the principal or designee suspects or has reason to believe that the family may be facing financial issues affecting its ability to pay the bills in question, the principal or designee shall advise the parent of potential community resources. If the student's parent does not respond to the Principal or designee by the end of the ten school days, the Principal or designee shall again contact the student's parent to provide a second notice that school breakfast or lunch will not be served to the student beginning one week from the second notice unless payment a payment plan is established. If the required payments under the payment plan have not been made the student will be provided a lunch that will contain the essentials in balanced nutritional selections as prescribed by the Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, New Jersey Department of Agriculture beginning the eighth calendar day from the date of the second notice.~~

~~A parent who has received a second notice their child's lunch or breakfast bill is in arrears and who has not made payment in full within one week from the date of the second notice will be requested to meet with the Principal or designee to discuss and resolve the matter.~~

~~This provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21 and this Policy will be made available to parents of all children in the school district in a manner as determined by the Superintendent.
N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21~~

Adopted; 21 August 2017

Last edited 7/16/22

Adopted:



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