

2017 Annual State Conference for Public and Non-Public Schools and Organizations

PRESENTED BY : MARY BURKS
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UPDATES: SCHOOL SUPPORT DIVISION

During this presentation, we will cover the following:

- Unpaid Meal Charges Policy
- Administrative Reviews
- Wellness Policy
- Food Safety Inspections

LOCAL MEAL CHARGE POLICIES

MEMO CODE: SP 46-2016

SUBJECT: Unpaid Meal Charges:

Local Meal Charge Policies

- All SFAs operating the NSLP and/or SBP must have a meal charge policy in place
- SFAs have discretion in developing the policy
- The policy can vary by grade level
- The meal charge policy must be implemented by School Year 2017-2018, July 1, 2017

KEY POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- Maintain **financial integrity** of the Programs
- Provide children with **adequate nutrition** to focus in schools
- Minimize **stigmatization** children with meal charges





PREVENTING STUDENT DISTRESS

Discouraged Actions	Encouraged Actions
Announcing or publicizing the names of children with unpaid meal charges	Communicating privately with families about a child's outstanding balance
Using hand stamps, stickers, or other physical markers to identify children with unpaid meal charges	Communicating payment reminders directly and discreetly to adults in the household
Sending clearly marked notices home when children have an outstanding balance	Sending discrete reminders in a plain, white envelope
Throwing a child's meal in the trash if they are unable to pay	Serving children the regular reimbursable meal while working with the family to obtain payment



POLICY REQUIREMENTS

To prevent overt identification of children eligible for free meals:

- A free child cannot be deny a reimbursable meal
- Prohibits the charging of extra sales items

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

Policies may allow children to:

- Charge all available reimbursable meals to the child's account
- Charge a limited number of type of meals to the child's account
- Receive an alternate meal, or
- Neither charge a meal nor receive an alternate meal



POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

ALTERNATE MEAL

- If alternate meals are offered, SFAs should explain:
 - – The meal service(s) that offer alternate meals
 - – The duration of the provision of alternate meals
 - – If applicable, the cost of the alternate(s)
 - – How alternate meals are presented



ALTERNATE MEAL REQUIREMENTS

- **Reimbursable** alternate meals must:
 - Meet meal pattern requirements
 - Meet Paid Lunch Equity requirements, when served to students eligible for “paid” meals
- **Non-reimbursable** alternate meals must:
 - Be paid for using non-Federal funds
 - Meet Smart Snacks and non-program food requirements, if students are charged for the meal

POLICY COMMUNICATION

SFAs must communicate policy, in writing to:

- All families at the start of the school year
- Families with students who transfer mid-year
- SFAs must provide the policy, in writing, to any school or district-level staff members responsible for policy enforcement
- Share the policy in multiple ways



ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

- “Back-to-School” packets
- School or district websites
- Student handbooks
- Written notices



DELINQUENT MEAL CHARGES

Memo SP 47-2016, Issued to clarify:

- The process of designating delinquent debt determined to be uncollectable as bad debt
- The process of obtaining assistance to offset losses
- How federal regulations and the definition of bad debt apply when meal charges are not collected.



DELINQUENT DEBT VS. BAD DEBT

- Uncollectable debt must be reclassified as “bad debt” and written off as an operating loss
- “Bad debt” costs are unallowable
 - Nonprofit school food service account funds may not be used to cover costs related to bad debt
 - Bad debt may not be absorbed
 - All bad debt losses must be restored using non-federal funds



Policy Checklists

*Found in the Appendix of
“Overcoming the Unpaid
Meal Challenge: Proven
Strategies from Our
Nation’s Schools”*

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/unpaid-meal-charges>

Local Meal Charge Policy Considerations for All SFAs		
<i>As provided in SP 46-2016, no later than July 1, 2017, all SFAs operating the Federal school meal programs are required to have a written meal charge policy. An SFA may have a consistent policy for all students in the school district or choose to apply the policy differently based on student grade level.</i>		
<i>For each entity or grade level that has a different policy, FNS encourages SFAs to explain in the policy:</i>		
1. Are students unable to pay for their meal at the time of the meal service allowed to charge a meal?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<i>If yes, which meals may be charged?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Breakfast <input type="checkbox"/> Lunch <input type="checkbox"/> Afterschool Snacks
2. If students are allowed to charge a meal, is there a limit to the number of charges or dollar limit allowed before requiring payment of the debt?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<i>If yes, what is the number or dollar amount for the charge limit(s)?</i> _____
3. If students are allowed to charge a meal, will they receive reimbursable or alternate meals?	<input type="checkbox"/> Reimbursable <input type="checkbox"/> Alternate <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<i>If students will receive an alternate meal, what will the meal contain? (Include all meals that apply.)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breakfast: _____ • Lunch: _____ • Afterschool Snacks: _____
4. If students are allowed to charge a meal, will they have limitations on the foods they may select for a reimbursable meal?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	<i>If yes, what are the limitations?</i> _____ _____ _____



PAYMENT OPTIONS

- Provide on-line payment systems
- Encourage families to track spending
- Allow automatic deductions when balances are low
- Provide repayment plans



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PAYMENT REMINDERS

- Email
- Telephone
- Automated
- In-person
- With other reminders





PROVISIONAL PROGRAMS

Community Eligibility Provision (CEP)

- Operating in a high-need communities
- Provide Breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled children
- CEP can be elected for an individual Site, group of Sites
- No need to collect applications
- Eligibility good for a four year period

Provision 2

- Provide Breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled children
- Reimbursement is determined by applying percentages of free, reduced, and paid meals – during the first year or base year, to claims
- Eligibility good for a four year period



ELIMINATING REDUCED PRICE

- At the discretion of SFAs, schools may serve meals at no cost to children eligible for reduced price meals
- Expenditures associated with covering student payments may be funded from the nonprofit food service account

SP 17-2014: Discretionary Elimination of Reduced Price Charges in the School Meal Programs

Sample Materials

*Found in the Appendix of
“Overcoming the Unpaid
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Strategies from Our
Nation’s Schools”*

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/unpaid-meal-charges>

Sample Outstanding Balance Letter

[PARENT/GUARDIAN NAME(S)]

[ADDRESS]

[CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE]

[MM/DD/YEAR]

Dear [NAME(S)],

The goal of [NAME OF SCHOOL'S] breakfast and lunch program is to provide healthy meals to children during the school day. In order to serve healthy, high-quality meals to all children, we must make sure we are financially secure. You play a key role in this effort, and are responsible for purchases made by your child in our school cafeteria.

As of [DATE], your child has a negative balance of \$[X.XX]. We strongly encourage you to pay this amount as soon as possible. Your response to this request is important. Paying back a debt shows your personal responsibility. It also keeps our food service program strong and ensures all children at our school have access to the healthy food they need to focus in the classroom.

To review [NAME OF SCHOOL'S] Meal Charge Policy, and the penalties for failing to pay back your child's negative balance, please visit [include web address here, or include a copy of the Unpaid Meal Charge Policy in the letter]. We understand that mistakes happen. But meal payments are important to our program, and we must collect your cafeteria debt.

Please contact [NAME OF SCHOOL OFFICIAL] if you have questions. If you think your child may qualify for free or reduced price school meals, please see the next page.

Thank you for your quick payment.

Sincerely,

[NAME], [TITLE]

CC: [NAME OF TEACHER, PRINCIPAL, SUPERINTENDENT, ETC. AS APPROPRIATE]

INCLUDE
PHOTO OF
SCHOOL
OFFICIAL
WRITING THE
LETTER

UNPAID MEAL CHARGES WEBSITE

Policy Guidance:

- SP 46-2016: Local Meal Charge Policies
- SP 47-2016: Clarification on Delinquent Meal Payments
- SP 57-2016: Guidance and Q@A

Best Practices:

- Guide: Overcoming the Unpaid Meal Challenge
- Webinar: The Challenge of Unpaid Meals



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RESOURCES

Unpaid Meal Charges

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/unpaid-meal-charges>

Request for Information: Unpaid Meal Charges

Request for Information: Unpaid Meal Charges

Docket Browser

[Return to Docket Folder Summary](#)

Docket ID: FNS-2014-0039

Agency: Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)

Parent Agency: Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Search

New Search within this Docket

Search Within Results

[Export](#)

Filter Results By...

463 results

Results per page:

Sort By:

Document Type

Clear Filter

- Notice (1)
- Proposed Rule (0)
- Rule (0)
- Supporting & Related Material (0)
- Other (0)
- Public Submission

Posted

Comments Due

[Comment on FR Doc # 2014-24575](#)

See attached file(s)

Public Submission | Posted: 11/19/2014 | ID: FNS-2014-0039-0203

Submitter Name: Dawn Thompson

[Comment on FR Doc # 2014-24575](#)

See attached file(s)

Public Submission | Posted: 12/15/2014 | ID: FNS-2014-0039-0278

Submitter Name: William Kreuter

[Comment on FR Doc # 2014-24575](#)

Neptune Township School District - Neptune, NJ We extend "emergency credit" of \$25 for elementary students and \$12 for middle and high school students - which can be used for...

Public Submission | Posted: 10/31/2014 | ID: FNS-2014-0039-0116



RECORDKEEPING

- SFAs must provide policies to the State agency during the Administrative Review
- SFAs must maintain documentation of policy communication methods



Administrative Reviews

THE COMMON REVIEW FINDINGS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- **Food Safety-HACCP**
- **SFA On Site Monitoring**
- **Smart Snacks Compliances**
- **Production Records**
- **Professional Standards**
- **Meal Counting and Claiming**
- **Missing Temperature Logs**
- **Local School Wellness Policy**
- **Meal Components and Quantities**
- **Potable Water**
- **Certification and Benefit Issuance**



Administrative Reviews

Transparency requirement -7 CFR 210.18 (M)

Administrative review final results must be easily available to the public

- The summary must cover
- meal access and reimbursement, meal patterns and nutritional quality of school meals,
- school nutrition environment (including food safety, local school wellness policy, and competitive foods), civil rights, and program participation.

Beginning with SY 2016-2017 results!



Wellness

Wellness revised policy must be in place by June 30, 2017 - Memo SP 24-2017

- Required to designate one or more LEA officials or school officials to ensure that each school complies with the LWP
- Triennial Assessment – Once every three years
- LWPs must include policies that would permit the marketing of only those foods and beverages that are consistent with the Smart Snacks standards.
- Any updates to the policy must be made available to the public on an annual basis

FOOD SAFETY INSPECTIONS REPORT FOR SY 2016-2017

- All school's districts are required to submitted the number of food safety inspections by site for school year 2016-2017
- Minimum two a year per site
- Reason for fewer than two inspections conducted



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QUESTIONS/CONTACT INFO



Office of Child Nutrition

601.576.4955

Mary Burks

mburks@mdek12.org



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