Giles County Public Schools
School Nutrition Program
Charge Policy for Food Service Programs

The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs are integral in ensuring that students have access to nutritious meals to support their academic success. It is also imperative to protect the financial stability of the school nutrition program.

The intent of this policy is to establish a process and procedure to handle situations when children eligible for reduced price or full price meal benefits have insufficient funds to pay for school meals; as well as for the collection of unpaid meal charges and delinquent account debt.

- In an effort to ensure all students receive nourishment during the school day, all students will have the opportunity to receive a school breakfast and/or lunch (the reimbursable tray). Applicable meal prices will be charged to the student's account.
- Students without funds to pay for a reduced price or full price meal will be allowed to charge breakfast and/or lunch (reimbursable tray).
- Ala carte items will only be sold when students have cash or have a positive balance in the terminal.
- Students who charge a meal will receive the same reimbursable meal options as other students.
- Adult meal charges are not permitted.
- This written policy will be posted on the SBO website and placed in the school calendar that's distributed to all students yearly. It will also be shared with all faculty/staff and school nutrition employees.
- All parents/guardians are encouraged to complete a free/reduced meal household application. For assistance in completing this, contact the Director of Operations at 921-1421 x 16. Applications can be completed at any time throughout the year, but must be completed yearly. Eligibility from the previous school year carries over the first 30 operating days of the next school year, or until a new application is received.
- Pre-payment of meals is encouraged. Parents/guardians have several options for making payments. (1) Cash or check is accepted at the school office; (2) Students can bring cash or check to use at the café terminal; (3) Anyone can use a credit card online through My School Bucks (www.myschoolbucks.com) (additional fees may apply).
- Students who have unpaid debt in the cafeteria will not be required to do chores or other work to pay for such meal or wear a wristband or hand stamp.
- A $75 fee will be charged on all returned checks for insufficient funds.
- Unpaid meal charges may be carried over at the end of the school year, thus allowing collection efforts to continue into the new school year until debt is paid in full.

Notifying the Household of Low or Negative Balances on Student Meal Accounts

- Parents/guardians can set up "low balance notifications" through www.myschoolbucks.com.
- Students may inquire or see their account balance. If the cashier sees their balance is low, a friendly reminder will be communicated to the student at the point of sale.
- Weekly notifications (phone call, email, letter, automated call, verbal, or text message) may be made to all students who owe food service debt.
- Unpaid meal charges are considered delinquent debt (the term meal indicates any food, beverage, or snack purchased through the food service department).

Collection Procedures for Debt

- All collection attempts are documented by date, time, and details of collection attempt.
- Delinquent account collection may be conducted daily at schools or at the School Board Office (Director of Operations).
- The School Board Office (Director of Operations) will notify households (phone call, email, letter, automated call, verbal, or text message) of negative balances.
- Notifications to households will include the amount of unpaid meal charges. Should parents/guardians request a copy of the student's meal participation report, one will be provided.
- The consequences of non-payment will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
- The employees responsible for managing unpaid meal charges are school nutrition staff, with the assistance from school administration.

Delinquent Debt

- Bad debt is defined as delinquent debt that is deemed uncollectible at the end of the school year.
- Bad debt is unallowable in the School Nutrition Program and cannot be carried over to the next school year.
- Funds resulting from bad debt cannot be recovered using School Nutrition Program funds and must be offset by non-federal sources. Unpaid debts are paid from nonfederal resources within the school division.

Assistance to Households

- Households with questions or needing assistance may contact the Director of Operations at (540) 921-1421 extension 16, or email at mbrown@gilesk12.net.
- Parents/guardians may complete a free/reduced meal application at any time throughout the school year. Forms are available in school offices and at the School Board Office. Faxed forms are unallowable. Once applications are received by the Director of Operations, a determination will be made and notifications sent within 10 days.
- Parents are encouraged to pre-pay student meal accounts either in person at the school or online at www.myschoolbucks.com. Parents/guardians can monitor participation and account balance at no cost at www.myschoolbucks.com.
- Repayment contracts may be developed by the Director of Operations (921-1421 extension 16). Terms will be limited to 6 months.
- If a parent/guardian regularly fails to provide meal money or send food to school with the student, administrators will determine the next course of action, which may include notifying the department of social services of suspected child neglect and/or taking legal steps to recover the unpaid meal charges.
- Any unused funds on the student's account may be refunded to the student upon graduation (parent/guardian must send an email to the Director of Operations requesting the refund). If refunds are not requested within 30 days of graduation, all remaining money will be used to offset unpaid debt on other student accounts (as determined appropriate by the Director of Operations).

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