

COLCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT

MEAL CHARGE PROCEDURE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to establish consistent procedures for the Colchester School District (“CSD”) Food Service Program to provide meals to students who have insufficient funds in their school meal accounts and the collection of unpaid meal debt.

I. GENERAL

- A. The CSD Food Service program recognizes proper nutrition is essential for adequate learning to occur and to establish lifelong, healthy eating habits while also working to maintain the financial integrity of the Food Service program.
- B. It is the practice of CSD Food Service program to offer high quality, healthy breakfasts and lunches that meet the federal guidelines to all students at a reasonable cost to ensure no child goes hungry.
- C. Payments to student accounts are made by depositing funds into the student’s account by sending cash or a check to the school, online payments at myschoolbucks.com or kiosks at Colchester Middle School and Colchester High School.
- D. Families may apply for free and reduced-price meals at any time during the school year. Meal applications are distributed to households by mail prior to the first day of school or sent home with students on the first day of school. Parents are encouraged to complete and return the applications as soon as possible. In addition, applications are available at the school office during regular business hours and online at www.csdvt.org/district/departments/nutritionalservices/freemeals.php. If household size changes or income changes, families may re-apply for meal benefits any time during the school year.
 - 1) Households who apply for free and reduced-price meal benefits are responsible for payment of all school meals and accumulated charges until approval is granted. Federal guidelines allow a maximum of 10 days to approve a new application. No child is allowed a free or reduced price meal without an approved application or direct certification information on file. Parents will receive a notification letter of the student’s eligibility showing the effective date. If a notification letter is not received within 10 days, the parent should check with the approving official at the school to see if the application has been received.
 - 2) Households who are receiving 3SquaresVT or Reach-Up benefits will receive a notification of eligibility letter based on Direct Certification from the school if the school has received information about your child(ren). If your household receives these benefits and you have not received this letter from the school, the school has not received information regarding eligibility of your child(ren), the household must contact the school immediately to provide current information.
 - 3) Free and reduced-price eligible students may receive a breakfast and a lunch each day at no charge.

- 4) A la carte items, such as a separate carton of milk, or a second slice of pizza, are not allowed to be charged. All a la carte items are at the student's full expense.

II. MEAL CHARGES

- A. If the student account has insufficient funds to pay for breakfast and/or lunch meals;
 - Students in grades K – 5 will be allowed to charge up to \$16.25 (5 meals).
 - Students in grades 6 – 12 will be allowed to charge up to \$18.75 (5 meals).
 - An alternate meal of a cheese sandwich, fruit or veggie and milk which meets the meal requirements will be offered to the students with a negative account balance of \$16.25 for K-5 and \$18.75 for 6-12.
 - All negative balances must be paid prior to the end of the school year.
- B. Free and reduced-price eligible students will always be provided a meal regardless of unpaid student accounts.
- C. A student eligible for paid meals who has 'cash in hand' at the time of meal service will be provided a meal regardless of unpaid student accounts. The 'cash in hand' will not be applied to past due accounts.
- D. Students with an overdrawn account are not allowed to charge a la carte items.
- E. **Any remaining balances will remain in the student's account or handled as follows;**
 - When students are promoted to the next Colchester School their balance will be transferred to the new school
 - If a student moves out of the district, a check for their remaining balance will be mailed to them upon request
 - If a student graduated and gives approval, their balance will be transferred to their siblings account.

III. ACCOUNT STATUS NOTIFICATIONS

- A. Households are strongly encouraged to keep sufficient funds in the student accounts to cover weekly meal purchases. The CSD Food Service program will notify each household of account balances by;
 - The Food Service program will send a weekly email and/or Robocalls.
 - Families can check their account balances online via myschoolbucks.com.
 - Families may contact the Food Service Director:

Steve Davis
802-264-5706
steve.davis@colchestersd.org

- Families may contact their student's school kitchen.

Colchester High School	(802)264-5739
Colchester Middle School	(802)264-5823
Malletts Bay School	(802)264-5910
Porters Point School	(802)264-5925
Union Memorial School	(802)264-5947

- Students will be given a verbal reminder or written notice in the food service line.
- B. The family will be notified when the student account balance has reached;
- Parents will be notified by email when the student account reaches the minimum balance of \$5.00/\$10.00 or less.
 - An email reminder will be sent to parents once the student account reaches zero.
 - Weekly emails will be sent to parents whose children have a negative account balance.
 - A second request for payment will be sent after 5 days if the household has not responded to the first request.
 - Robocalls will be used to contact parents whose student accounts have reached the minimum balance or have a negative balance.

IV. DEBT COLLECTION

When the student balance is in the negative, the following collection activities will be followed:

- The Food Service Manager will contact the household to request payment.
- The Food Service Manager will contact the building principal if no payment is received.
- The building principal will contact the household to discuss the requirement of the family to provide meals for the student.
- The building principal may contact the local social services office if the household refuses to provide meals or pay for student meals.
- All funds owed to the Food Service Program will be paid in full on the last day of school.
- Checks returned with non-sufficient funds will follow the district's practice.