

Business/Non-Instructional Operations

Food Service-Charging Meals

The goal of the food service program is to provide students with nutritious foods that will enhance learning. The school nutrition program is an essential part of the education system and by providing good-tasting, nutritious meals in pleasant surroundings we are helping to teach students the value of good nutrition.

Although not required by law, because of CREC's participation in the Child Nutrition Programs, the CREC Council authorizes administration to establish a system to allow a student to charge a meal to their automated prepayment account.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-215 Lunches, breakfasts and other feeding programs for public school children and employees.

10-215a Nonpublic school and nonprofit agency participation in feeding programs.

10-215b Duties of State Board of Education re feeding programs.

State Board of Education Regulations

Operational Memorandum #19-10, State of Connecticut, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services "Unallowable Charges to No-profit School Food Service Accounts and the Serving of Meals to No-paying Full and Reduced Price Students".

National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program; Competitive Foods. (7 CFR Parts 210 and 220, Federal Register, Vol. 45 No. 20, Tuesday, January 29, 1980, pp 6758-6772.

Policy adopted: January 21, 2015
Revised: January 15, 2025

CAPITOL REGION EDUCATION COUNCIL
Hartford, Connecticut

Business/Non-Instructional Operations

Food Services

Charging Meals

The school nutrition program is an essential part of the education system and by providing good-tasting, nutritious meals in pleasant surroundings we are helping to teach students the value of good nutrition.

CREC uses MySchoolBucks.com in CREC-sponsored meal programs, an automated prepayment system, which allows parents/guardians to view their child's meal account balance and purchases, receive low-balance notifications, and make deposits to their child's school meal account. (Non-CREC sponsored meal programs use various other online payment systems, and meal charging policies are determined by the program sponsor.)

Any student whose account has insufficient funds and does not bring a meal from home may charge a meal, excluding a la carte items.

Each Thursday, an automated reminder phone call and e-mail will be sent to the parent/guardian of any student who has unpaid charges. If payment is not received, a formal letter will be sent and a follow up call will be made to the parent/guardian. Communications to the parent/guardian shall include information regarding local food pantries; application for CREC's program for free or reduced-price meals and for the supplemental nutrition assistance program administered by the Department of Social Services; and a link to the website of the town of the student's residence listing any community services available to the residents of such town. If the unpaid charges due are equal to or more than the cost of thirty meals, such parent/guardian shall be referred to CREC's Liaison for Homeless Students. Publicly identifying or shaming a student for any such unpaid charges, including, but not limited to, delaying or refusing to serve a meal to such student, designating a specific meal option for such student or otherwise taking any disciplinary action against such student is prohibited.

Unpaid meal charges will be considered "delinquent debt". CREC may refer delinquent debt to a collection service. CREC's efforts to recover from parents/guardians money owed due to the charging of meals must not have a negative impact on the children involved and shall focus primarily on the adults in the household responsible for providing funds for meal purchases. Delinquent debt that has not been recovered by June 30 will be considered "bad debt." Bad debt will be written off as an operating loss and will not be absorbed by the nonprofit school food service account, but must be restored using non-federal funds.

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As funds from the nonprofit school food service account may not be used to cover the cost of charged meals, all charges not paid for before the end of the school year will be refunded to the school lunch account.

Adults are not allowed to charge meals and shall pay for such meals at the time of service or through their pre-paid lunch account.

CREC may accept gifts, donations or grants from any public or private sources for the purpose of paying off any unpaid charges for school meals.

This regulation shall be included in the student/parent handbooks, placed on the CREC website, on the website of each school/program and published at the beginning of each school year at the time information is distributed regarding free and reduced-price meals.

Regulation issued: October 15, 2014
Revised: September 20, 2017
Revised: November 17, 2021

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