

**Series 3000**  
**Business**

**FOOD SERVICE CHARGE POLICY**

It is the policy of the Ashford Board of Education (the “Board”) to ensure that students receive healthy and nutritious meals through the district’s Food Services Program. In order to sustain the Food Services Program, the Program cannot permit the excessive charging of student meals. Therefore, any charging of meals must be consistent with this policy and its accompanying regulations. The Superintendent or his/her designee shall develop regulations designed to effectively and respectfully address family responsibility for unpaid meals.

The Board encourages any parent or guardian who anticipates a problem with paying for meals to contact the Food Service Manager and/or the applicable school principal as soon as possible for assistance.

**The National School Lunch Program**

The Ashford Public School District participates in the National School Lunch Program and the National School Breakfast Program, sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture, which permits the school system to offer free and reduced price meals to students who qualify. The Ashford Board of Education encourages all families who may have a child who is eligible for free or reduced price lunch to apply. Families may apply at any time during the summer or school year and may file a new application if there is a change in household income or the number of members of a family’s household. Applicants are responsible to pay for meals until the application for free and reduced price lunch is completed and approved.

All applications for free and reduced price lunch and any related information will be considered strictly confidential and will not be shared outside the Food Services Program.

**Legal References:**

Operational Memorandum # 15-14, Student Debt and Unpaid Meal Charges, Connecticut State Department of Education (February 27, 2014).

Operational Memorandum # 19-10, Unallowable Charges to Non-profit School Food Service Accounts and the Servicing of Meals to Non-paying Full and Reduced Price Students, Connecticut State Department of Education (August 5, 2010).

Ashford Board of Education  
Ashford, Connecticut

United States Department of Agriculture, Letter from Under Secretary Kevin  
Concannon to Chief State School Officers regarding Unpaid Meal Charges  
(February 2014).

Approved by the Ashford Board of Education:

January 21, 2016

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**FOOD SERVICE CHARGE ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS**

In order to sustain the Food Service Program in the Ashford Public Schools, the Board requires that each family pay in advance for each student's school meals.

***Payments:***

To facilitate payment in advance for school meals, the Board has established a payment program whereby parents or guardians may pay for meals in advance either by cash or check or through [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com) through the My School Bucks program. For more information about payment methods or if you have a question, please contact the Food Service Manager at 860-429-6419x360.

If a parent or guardian chooses to send in one payment that is to be divided between sibling accounts, it must specify how the funds are to be distributed amongst the student accounts. Funds may not be transferred between sibling accounts unless written permission is received from the parent or guardian.

***Applications for Free and Reduced Price Lunch:***

If at any time, a parent or guardian anticipates a problem with paying for meals, please contact the Food Service Manager as soon as possible for assistance. Parents and guardians are encouraged to apply for free and reduced price meals for their children. In order to qualify, families must meet eligibility criteria. Applications can be filed at any time during the summer or school year and new applications may be filed if there is a change in household income or in the number of household members. Applicants are responsible to pay for meals until the application for free and reduced price lunch is completed and approved.

All applications for free and reduced price lunch and any related information will be considered strictly confidential and will not be shared outside the Food Services Program.

***Low or Negative Account Balances:***

When a student has a negative account balance, no charging of snack items will be allowed.

No child may be denied a school meal due to lack of pre-payment, however, the process set forth below shall be followed whenever a child does not have sufficient funds in his or her school meal account.

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***Process for Addressing a Low or Negative Account Balance:***

Step I

If a student's meal account falls below \$2.50, the Food Service Manager shall send home a reminder letter with the student reminding the parent to deposit funds into the student's meal account.

Step II

If the parent or guardian does not promptly deposit sufficient funds into the school meal account and the school meal account balance becomes negative, the Food Service Manager shall contact the parent by telephone or email reminding the parent to deposit funds into the student's meal account.

Step III

If the parent or guardian does not promptly deposit sufficient funds into the school meal account, a second reminder letter will be sent and this letter will include information for the parent or guardian about the National School Lunch Program's eligibility criteria for free and reduced price lunch along with an application for the free and reduced price lunch program.

The letter will also state that, unless the parent or guardian deposits funds into the student's meal account within five days, then for any such meals following, the student will be served an alternative meal consisting of unflavored milk, a piece of fruit and the choice of either a peanut butter and jelly sandwich or a cheese sandwich (unless there is a medically documented allergy or dietary restriction). The letter shall state that such alternative meals shall be charged to the student's account.

Step IV

If the parent does not deposit sufficient funds into the school meal account within five days, the student shall be served an alternative meal consisting of unflavored milk, a piece of fruit and the choice of either a peanut butter and jelly sandwich or a cheese sandwich (unless there is a medically documented allergy or dietary restriction). Additionally, the Food Services Manager shall send a Certified Letter to the parent or guardian reminding the parent or guardian of the need to deposit funds into the student's meal account immediately. This letter will include additional information for the parent or guardian about the National School Lunch Program's eligibility criteria for free and reduced price lunch along with an additional application for the free and reduced price lunch program.

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The Business Manager shall place a follow up phone call to the parent or guardian reminding the parent or guardian of the lack of funds and the consequences for non-payment.

Step V

If the parent or guardian does not deposit funds into the school meal account after the Certified Letter has been sent, the School Principal shall place a third call to the parent or guardian to remind the parent or guardian to deposit funds and to pay any accumulated arrears and to inform the parent that the student's progress reports and report cards shall be withheld until payment of the arrears has been received and processed by the Food Services Program. If necessary, the Principal shall also schedule a meeting with the parent or guardian to discuss the arrearage.

Legal References:

Operational Memorandum # 15-14, Student Debt and Unpaid Meal Charges, Connecticut State Department of Education (February 27, 2014).

Operational Memorandum # 19-10, Unallowable Charges to Non-profit School Food Service Accounts and the Servicing of Meals to Non-paying Full and Reduced Price Students, Connecticut State Department of Education (August 5, 2010).

United States Department of Agriculture, Letter from Under Secretary Kevin Concannon to Chief State School Officers regarding Unpaid Meal Charges (February 2014).

Regulation Tentatively Approved Pending BOE Review: January 21, 2016