

<u>Section E:</u> Business Management	Knox County Board of Education Policy		
	School Nutrition Program Charges	Descriptor Code:	Issued:
		E-191	7/16
		Reviewed:	Revised:
		7/23	9/23

GENERAL

Ensuring that students are offered wholesome, nutritious and appealing meals helps ensure that students are ready to engage in the rigorous instruction and academic expectations of Knox County Schools. Knox County Schools operates a school nutrition program, managed under state and federal guidelines, that is designed to meet this need. Federal regulations require that this program operate financially independent from other school system activities. As such, the program has strict requirements to ensure that student meal accounts be made whole at the end of each fiscal year.

Students are encouraged to pre-pay for meals using the accounts made available to all students through the School Nutrition Program point of sale system. However, the Board of Education understands that students may from time to time lose meal money or find their account unexpectedly in arrears. Therefore, the School Nutrition Director will provide a system to allow students to charge meals. Charging meals is for emergencies only, and this courtesy is extended only to students. Students shall not charge a la carte (extra) items.

CHECKS RETURNED DUE TO NON-SUFFICIENT FUNDS (NSF)

The School Nutrition Department, along with the district's Finance team, will implement a procedure for notifying a parent or legal guardian of a check returned for NSF.

Once an NSF check has been received from a parent or legal guardian, checks will no longer be accepted from the parent or legal guardian until the NSF amount has been paid in full.

APPLYING FOR FREE-REDUCED PRICE MEALS

Parents or legal guardians may apply for free or reduced price meals at any time during the school year. If a student's eligibility status changes to free or reduced price, any prior unpaid meal charges that have accrued are still owed.

PROCEDURES FOR COLLECTING DEBT

Each school cafeteria in conjunction with the school administration and School Nutrition Director, shall communicate regularly with students' parents or legal guardians regarding any unpaid meal charges in the following manner:

1. The School Nutrition Department will notify the parent or legal guardian via the district's communication system of a student's unpaid account balance, and inquire as to whether the family would like to apply for free or reduced price meals.

2. If necessary, once a student's balance exceeds \$25.00, the School Nutrition Department will contact the parent or legal guardian in writing regarding the negative balance.
3. If necessary, the school principal or the principal's designee will contact the parent or legal guardian in writing or by telephone.
4. The debt shall be referred to a collection agent (if available) retained by the Knox County Schools for such purpose. The Director of Schools shall establish in procedure a reasonable threshold for the level of debt to be referred for collection.

To comply with federal and state regulations, unpaid meal charges and any other related monies owed to the School Nutrition Program must be paid from funds other than those of the School Nutrition Program. Any loss arising from unpaid meal charges or other bad debts (e.g. NSF checks and NSF check fees) are unallowable.

At the end of each fiscal year, the Director of School Nutrition is responsible for compiling and reporting all unpaid meal charges and other bad debts to the Knox County Schools Finance office for reimbursement from the General Purpose School Fund.

Legal Reference:

1. *Tennessee Internal School Uniform Accounting Policy Manual.*

- The Procedures for Collecting Debt section of this policy was suspended June 10, 2020 through the 2021-2022 school year in response to the state of emergency caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- Lines 7-9 on Page 2 of this policy were suspended on February 9, 2023 for debt accrued during the 2022-2023 school year.

Approved as to Legal Form
By Knox County Law Director 7/25/2023
/Gary T. Dupler/Deputy Law Director