

**Business**

**FOOD SERVICE POLICY**

The school nutrition program is an essential part of the education system and by providing good-tasting, nutritious breakfasts and lunches, we are helping to teach students the value of good nutrition. The Hebron Board of Education's (Board's) objective is to provide a high quality nutritious breakfast and lunch at the lowest cost possible. The Board's expectation is that the food service program is self-sufficient; state and federal subsidies and costs paid by parents/guardians for student meals maintain the program. However, the school district's participation in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) requires the board to pay for any financial shortfall at the end of the year.

**Supervision:** The district administrators will provide oversight and guidance on a regular basis regarding the quality of the food, financial stability, health department inspection reports, compliance with state and federal regulations and industry innovations. District administration will ensure compliance with annual food and nutrition training for food service staff in compliance with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) professional standards.

**Communication:** Regular communication with parents regarding the food service program will be ongoing. This policy shall be provided in writing to all households at the start of each school year and to the households of any student new to the district during the school year. This policy shall be included in student/parent handbooks and placed on the district's website. This policy shall be provided to all school staff, food service staff, school partners, and the homeless liaison responsible for its enforcement or who may be engaged to support families with unpaid meal balances. Documentation of the methods used to communicate this policy will be maintained.

**Child Nutrition Program Participation:** The Board participates in one or more school USDA Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) and accepts full responsibility for adhering to federal and state guidelines and regulations pertaining to these programs.

The Board ensures 30 minute lunch blocks for all students on full days of school and 25 minute lunch blocks during half days. Breakfasts and lunches are planned to meet the specified nutrient standards outlined by the USDA. Free water stations are available in the cafeteria and water bottle fill stations are available throughout the school for use throughout the day.

The district ensures that all competitive foods served during the day (i.e. a la carte sales, vending machine sales, school store sales, and fundraising sales of food consumed during the day) comply with the USDA Smart Snacks in School requirements

(<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smart-snacks-school>). All food and beverage products offered (free) or sold after school comply with USDA nutritional standards.

**Meal and A La Carte Food Payments:** The food service program will make every effort to make meal payments easy and convenient for parents and guardians by offering a cafeteria account program where each day, the student's account will be charged for each meal ordered. (Please note, students in grades 3 through 6 are also able to use their cafeteria account balance to purchase a la carte items.)

Funds can be added to a student's account via electronic payment, check, cash, or money order; Should a check be returned for insufficient funds, the family is responsible for paying any bank charges associated, any subsequent payment received will first pay the insufficient funds charge. Any family who provides checks three times that are returned for insufficient funds will no longer be able to pay by check.

Cafeteria account balances can be carried over year to year and upon sixth grade graduation, funds will be transferred to the account of the youngest sibling. If no sibling remains in Hebron Public Schools, the funds will be transferred to the RHAM food service program for use in grades 7 and above. When students or staff leave the district any unclaimed balances will then be transferred to program revenue at the end of the year; however a record of balances will be maintained for two years in which individuals are able to request a reimbursement.

**Free and Reduced Meal Applications:** The Board will ensure eligible students are provided with free or reduced price meals. Free and reduced meal applications and information will be sent home in August of each school year via email or hard copy. Applications are also available on the district website and in each school's main office. All applications for free and reduced price meals and any related information will be considered strictly confidential and not to be shared outside of the district's food services program. Families are responsible to pay for meals until an application for the free or reduced price meals is completed and approved. Any parent/guardian who anticipates a problem with paying for meals is encouraged to contact the school principal or food service manager. The Board encourages all families who may have a child eligible for free or reduced price meals to apply.

**Negative Account Balances:** The Board understands that federal funds are not to be used to subsidize meals for adults (teachers, staff and visitors) or to pay negative student cafeteria balances. Any student who needs a meal will be provided with a meal regardless of their cafeteria account balance; however adults are not allowed to carry negative balances at any time.

Although children will not be penalized for the status of their cafeteria account, in order to sustain the district's food services program, the district cannot permit the excessive purchasing of a breakfast or lunch sending a cafeteria account into the negative. Therefore, negative account balances will be handled in the following way:

1. Parents/guardians will be notified of any negative balances weekly and asked for prompt payment;
2. If the negative balance continues into a second week, the food service manager will make a second attempt to contact the family, discuss the issue and encourage them to complete a free and reduced meal application;
3. If the negative balance carries beyond the second week, a letter will be sent to the family from central office administration, including a copy of the district's food service policy, and a requesting a meeting to discuss potential solutions;
4. Money owed shall be considered "delinquent debt" after reasonable attempts are made to collect it. When it is determined that further collection efforts of the district are useless or too costly, debt collection shall be moved to a third party collection agency. These referrals will occur in January and June each year.
5. In the event a student's unpaid meal charges are equal to or more than the cost of thirty (30) meals, the parents/guardians of such student will be referred to the District's homeless education liaison.

#### 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

- State of Connecticut, Department of Education, School Health, Nutrition and Family Services Operational Memorandum No. 11-22, "Connecticut Statutory Requirements for Unpaid Meal Charges in Public Schools," June 15, 2022.
- State of Connecticut, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education Operational Memorandum No. 4-17, "Guidance on Unpaid Meal Charges and Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments," Nov. 2, 2016
- Operational Memorandum #19-10, State of Connecticut, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education "Unallowable Charges to non-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

USDA Guidance:

- 7 C.F.R. Part 210 National School Lunch Program.
- 7 C.F.R. Part 220 School Breakfast Program.
- 7 C.F.R. Part 245 Determining Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals and Free Milk in Schools.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Policy Memo SP 46-2016, “Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policy,” July 8, 2016.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Policy Memo SP 47-2016, “Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments,” July 8, 2016.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Policy Memo SP 57-2016, “Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q&A,” Sept. 16, 2016.
- SP 46-2016, "Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies"
- SP 47-2016, "Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payment"
- SP 57-2016 "Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q and A"
- SP 58-2016 "2016 Edition: Overcoming the Unpaid Meal Challenge: Proven Strategies from Our Nation's Schools"

ADOPTED: 5/8/2014

REVISED: 7/12/2018; 12/9/2021; 10/14/2022