

## Procedure Overview

Cherry Creek Schools is committed to ensuring that all students receive the nourishment needed to excel. Through the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs, students are able to receive meals at no cost if they qualify for free or reduced-price meals under federal income guidelines or purchase meals at a published meal price. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) has determined children and their families must be informed about how children who pay full-price (paid rate) for a reimbursable meal are impacted by having insufficient funds on hand or in their account to purchase a meal. There is no Federal regulation that require school districts to serve meals to a child who does not have sufficient funds to purchase one; however, Cherry Creek Schools has developed a practice to address this issue, as we feel it is important to ensure we feed all kids, every day, in an equitable manner. Meal charge privileges are at the discretion of the district and evaluated on an as-needed basis.

## Definitions

- Reimbursable Meal – Meals that are eligible for Federal Reimbursement.
- Charged Meal – Any reimbursable meal purchased that takes the account balance below \$0.00.
- A la Carte – Single items offered in addition to or separate from the reimbursable meal such as: bottled beverages, milk, extra entrees, snack items, etc.
- NSFSA – Nonprofit School Food Service Account

## Prevention and Communication of Low/Insufficient Funds

It is the goal of the Cherry Creek School District to prevent accounts from becoming negative. There are a number of measures in place for all schools to prevent students and families from experiencing negative meal account balances:

- *Free & Reduced-price Meal Application*- Families are encouraged to complete the application for meal benefits annually. The form may be accessed through the Food and Nutrition Services website or printed copies are available at every school and from the Student Nutrition Center located at 14270 E. Briarwood Ave., Centennial, CO 80112. Computers are also available at the Student Nutrition Center to complete the online Free and Reduced Price meal application.
- *Carry Over Status* – All students with a prior year “Free” or “Reduced” status keeps their status for 30 school days into the new school year, allowing time to resubmit a new school year application.
- *Verbal Reminders* – Kitchen staff will offer discrete, verbal reminders a few days before the student account balance will run out.
- *Negative Balance Email Notification*- Automatic emails are generated to families with students whose account has a negative balance and are set up to receive electronic

communications from the district. These emails occur two times per week until the account balance is increased above \$0.00.

- Students with an exact balance of \$0.00 will not receive an automated email. Generally, these students are inactive or do not dine with us.
- Families can have this turned off by contacting Nutrition Services.
- *PayPams* – Food and Nutrition Services offers an online system for families to check balances and make payments.
- *Contact Your School* – Families can contact the school kitchen directly to request to check their balance.
- *Payment Options* – Students may purchase a reimbursable meal with cash or check at the time the meal is served. Families may send funds (cash or check) to school to add money to the student's meal account or replenish account with a credit card using PayPams.
- *Additional Action* – When a student consistently does not have money for meals, the Kitchen Manager should discuss this with the Principal, Counselor, student or family to determine the best solution for the student.

#### Charge Allowances - Grades PreK-5th

Cherry Creek Schools allows for students in grades PreK-5<sup>th</sup> to charge meals up to a negative \$12.00 (four lunch meals) balance.

- Charged meals are directly charged to the student's meal account within the point of sale system.
- Students are not allowed to purchase a la carte items (bottled beverages, milk, extra entrees, snack items, etc.) when their account is in the negative.
- When a student's balance reaches a \$7.00 negative balance, the Kitchen Manager will contact family directly by telephone to make them aware of negative balance and necessity of replenishing account.

#### Charge Allowances Grades 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

Cherry Creek Schools allows for students to charge meals up to a negative \$10.00 (three lunch meals) balance in 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade.

- Charged meals are directly charged to the student's meal account within the point of sale system.
- Students are not allowed to purchase a la carte items (bottled beverages, milk, extra entrees, snack items, etc.) when their account is in the negative.
- When a student's balance reaches a \$6.00 negative balance, the Kitchen Manager will contact family directly by telephone to make them aware of negative balance and necessity of replenishing account.

### Charge Allowances Grades 9th-12th

At grades 9-12, Cherry Creek Schools allows students to charge meals up to a negative \$5.00 (1 lunch meal).

- Students are not allowed to purchase a la carte items (bottled beverages, milk, extra entrees, snack items, etc.) when their account is in the negative.

### **COLLECTIONS OF DELINQUENT MEAL PAYMENTS**

Delinquent Debt – As defined by USDA, delinquent debt includes unpaid meal charges that are considered collectable, and efforts are being made to collect them. Delinquent debt, or a negative balance, remains on the accounting documents (accounts receivable) until it is either collected or is determined to be uncollectable and written off. Cherry Creek School District considers active student accounts with negative balances to be in delinquent status.

- During the time a student has a negative balance or delinquent debt no a la carte purchases are allowed.
- Once the account balance is brought to above zero (\$0.00) a la carte purchases may resume.