

Mercer County Technical School District

School Nutrition Program Negative Balance Procedures

In order to provide students and parents/guardians in the Mercer County Technical School District with the best possible service, clarity, and accountability surrounding the school nutrition program, the following procedures regarding student meal account balances will be implemented effective July 1, 2017:

1. The Mercer County Technical School District and Sodexo Food Service encourage parents/guardians to pre-pay meals for their children, thereby eliminating situations that could develop during mealtime over negative balances. Pre-payments for breakfast and lunch can be made via cash or check (made payable to **Mercer County Special Services School District**).
2. Students wanting a meal and not having money to purchase a meal will be allowed to charge a meal, with repayment expected within one (1) or two (2) school days.
3. Students may charge their accounts only for a reimbursable meal or milk – **students will not be permitted to charge a la carte items or an extra meal**. A maximum of \$10.00 will be allowed to be charged prior to implementation of the meal replacement policy (which may consist of Sunnybutter & Jelly sandwich OR a cheese sandwich (Sunnybutter is a sunflower seed butter that is processed at a nut-free facility)).
4. Once a student has reached a charged balance of \$10.00 with no repayment that student will receive a lunch consisting of a Sunnybutter & Jelly sandwich OR a cheese sandwich and milk in place of a lunch menu choices. Students should not go through the regular meal line but should proceed directly to the cashier if they are not eligible to charge any more meals.
5. A list of negative account balances of more than \$10.00 will be forwarded to each School Supervisor and/or Secretary by the Business Office as deemed necessary. The School will send letters to students whose balances exceed \$10.00. Once balance notification has been sent out, parents/guardians will have ten (10) days from the date of the notification to pay or make arrangements to pay outstanding student balances.
6. If the student's negative balance has not been addressed by the parents/guardians within the ten (10) day period, a second notification will be sent indicating that after an additional eight (8) days, the student **will not be provided with any meals** until such balance has been addressed.
7. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to submit free/reduced meal application forms yearly, as well as, when their household information or income changes. Applications can be submitted at any time and are available during registration and the student's school, as well as, on the district's website: www.MCTS.edu. Free/reduced applications will also become a part of all paperwork provided to families of students transferring to Mercer County Technical Schools. While MCTS and Sodexo strongly encourage families to apply for free/reduced meal benefits, the final application responsibility lies with the parents/guardians.
8. In extreme hardship situations the building administrator may authorize a one-time exception to the charge policy by providing the student with a signed authorization form to be presented to the cashier at lunch.
9. Both the MCTS and Sodexo are committed to providing meals to students who choose to participate in the program. However, there is a responsibility on the part of the students and parents/guardians to satisfy all financial obligations to the lunch program in a timely manner.
10. The school Principal or designee has the option to take further action as outlined in MCTS Policy 8550 (attached).

Questions regarding the school policy and the above noted procedures should be direct to your child's school principal or the MCTS School Business Administrator, Tanya Dawson at 609-586-2123.

POLICY

Mercer County Technical Board of Education

Section: Operations

8550. OUTSTANDING FOOD SERVICE CHARGES

Date Created: October, 2015

Date Edited: August, 2016

8550- OUTSTANDING FOOD SERVICE CHARGES

The Board of Education understands a student may forget to bring breakfast or lunch, as applicable, or money to purchase breakfast or lunch to school on a school day. When this happens, the food service program will provide the student with breakfast or lunch with an expectation payment will be made the next school day or shortly thereafter. However, there may be circumstances when payment is not made and a student's school breakfast/lunch bill is in arrears. The school district will manage a student's breakfast or lunch bill that is in arrears in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21 and this Policy.

In the event a student's school lunch or breakfast bill is in arrears, the Principal or designee shall contact the student's parent to provide notice of the amount in arrears and shall provide the parent a period of ten school days to pay the full amount due. If the student's parent does not make full payment to the Principal or designee by the end of the ten school days, the Principal or designee shall again contact the student's parent to provide a second notice that their child's lunch or breakfast bill is in arrears. If payment in full is not made within one week from the date of the second notice, the student will not be served school breakfast or lunch, as applicable, beginning the eighth calendar day from the date of the second notice.

A parent who has received a second notice their child's lunch or breakfast bill is in arrears and who has not made payment in full within one week from the date of the second notice will be requested to meet with the Principal or designee to discuss and resolve the matter.

A parent's refusal to meet or take other steps to resolve the matter may be indicative of more serious issues in the family or household. In these situations, the Principal or designee shall consult with and seek necessary services from both the County Board of Social Services and the Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency, as appropriate.

When a parent's routine failure to provide breakfast or lunch is reasonably suspected to be indicative of child abuse or neglect, the Principal or designee shall immediately report such suspicion to the Department of Children and Families, Division of Child Protection and Permanency as required in N.J.S.A. 9:6-8.10. Such reporting shall not be delayed to accommodate a parent's meeting with the Principal or designee.

The provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21 and this Policy will be made available to parents of all children in the school district in a manner as determined by the Superintendent.

N.J.S.A. 18A:33-21

Adopted: 20 October 2015

Revised: 16 August 2016