

**BABCOCK NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL  
UNPAID MEAL POLICY  
ADOPTED AND EFFECTIVE MAY 30, 2018  
Amended 7-18-23**

**Statement of Purpose**

The goal of Babcock Neighborhood School, Inc. (“BNS”) meal program is to provide nutritious meals to children during the school day. Children may receive breakfast and lunch at no cost to them if they are categorically eligible for free meals or if they qualify for free meals based on federal poverty guidelines. Sometimes, however, children who do not qualify based on these standards would like a breakfast or lunch, but do not have money in their account or in-hand to cover the cost of the meal at the time of the meal service.

BNS recognizes that unpaid meal charges represent a difficult and complex issue directly impacting full participation in the program, as well as the children they serve. The intent of this policy is to establish an approved process to manage situations when children, who are eligible for reduced-price or full-price meal services have insufficient funds to pay for school meals. This policy also serves to secure the collection of current unpaid meal charges and bad debts without discrimination as defined by the USDA’s non-discrimination policy. Furthermore, this policy conveys how participating students who do not qualify for free or reduced price meals:

- will be charged for meals.
- are offered alternate meals if the meal account is low or out of funds.
- are provided limits on meal charges if the meal account is low or out of funds.

Additionally, the policy provides communication on how the SFA’s accounting procedure in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders give support to students when the meal account has insufficient funds, meals are disbursed, and payment collections are required.

**The Policy:**

Our policy ensures a consistent and transparent approach to situations where children do not have the funds needed to pay for their meals and helps us maintain a financially sound program. Unpaid meal charges, like any other money owed to the SFA, are considered “delinquent debt” when payment is overdue. The debt is classified as delinquent if it is considered collectable, and efforts are being made to collect it.

Unpaid meal charges can be carried over at the end of the school year (i.e., beyond June 30) as a delinquent debt and collection efforts are continued into the new school year. This allows BNS to work with families to establish repayment plans. Collections are not pursued outside of the school affiliation.

**Policy Content:**

1. Students who do not qualify for free meals will not be denied a reimbursable meal when they have accrued a negative balance on their cafeteria account.
2. Students who have money in hand to pay for a reduced-price or full price meal at the time of service are provided a meal. If the student intended to use the money for that day's meal, BNS will not use the money to repay a negative balance or other unpaid meal charge debt.
3. Students are allowed to charge 2 days of meals, both breakfast and lunch or the dollar equivalent to 2 days of breakfast and lunch.
4. After 2 days of charging breakfast or lunch or breakfast and lunch an alternate reimbursable meal will be provided for breakfast and/or lunch.

**Alternative Meal**

The alternate breakfast will consist of 2oz graham crackers, milk, & ½ cup fruit. The alternate lunch meal consists of bagged carrots, whole grain bun with cheese slice, milk, & fruit by required portions.

Alternate meal is packaged in the same manner as the regular meals being served, and fulfills the USDA meal pattern requirements. When the meal is being served to students with full paid status the price is under the PLE (Paid Lunch Equity) requirements. When meals are served to reduced priced beneficiaries, the price will be 0.30/breakfast and 0.40 breakfast or according to USDA recommended price for reduced meals. Meals that are non-reimbursable shall be served under the smart snacks and non-program food requirements.

**Communicating the Policy:**

1. The written meal charge policy will be communicated to the household by:
  - Accommodating a post on Babcock Schools website,
  - Including a copy of the policy in the student information packet distributed on the first day of school and to all transfer students during the school year, •
  - Attaching a copy to the Meal Benefits Application module
2. The written meal charge policy will be communicated to all cafeteria staff prior to the first day of school.
3. National School Lunch Program staff shall receive training on the Meal Charge Policy implementation and record of training will be maintained as part of the professional development portfolio.
4. Documentation of the communication and training plan will be maintained for the Federal Program Administrative Review.

**Notifying the Household of Low or Negative Balance in Student Cafeteria Account:**

1. The student's household will be notified when the cafeteria account falls below.  
\$5.00 OR the equivalent of one day's meal, breakfast, and lunch.
2. The school will notify households of low or negative balances. via US mail, email, or a notification letter will be sent home by the student in a white envelope and addressed to the parent or guardian.

3. Notifications to households will include the amount of unpaid meal charges, expected payment dates, the consequences of non-payment and where to go for questions or assistance.
4. The consequences of non-payment will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
5. The persons responsible for managing unpaid meal charges are:
  - The Cafeteria Manager
  - The Bookkeeper

At the end of the school year, the Bookkeeper & Cafeteria Manager will evaluate all delinquent debt for conversion to bad debt. Bad debt will be restored to the SFA at the end of the same fiscal year, from the general fund prior, The NSLP Financial Procedure does not allow bad debts to be offset by program funds.

### **Collection Procedures**

1. No extra charges will be incurred on a-la-carte items purchased or on any negative accounts or on accounts with a zero balance.
2. Send an initial letter followed by a timely reminder.
3. Reminder Telephone Calls are made once per week in an attempt to collect payment.
4. Notice of Adverse Action: Extracurricular Activities
  - Students with a negative balance will not be able to participate in any after school Extracurricular Activities including Clubs, Trailcare, & Athletics until balance is paid in full.
5. Students who transfer will be handled on a case by case basis.

### **Assistance to Households:**

Households with questions regarding monies owed may contact the school's cafeteria manager or bookkeeper..

**BABCOCK NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOL, INC.**  
**UNPAID MEAL POLICY**  
**Board Certificate**

I hereby certify that the foregoing Policy was adopted by a majority vote of a quorum of the Governing Board of Directors at a duly noticed meeting held on July 18th, 2023. This Policy is intended to supersede and replace any prior policies regarding the same subject matter.

Robert Kenny

Robert Kenny (Jul 26, 2023 14:37 EDT)

Robert Kenny, Board Chair

Jul 26, 2023

Date

**Attest:**

Natalie Bolton

Natalie Bolton (Jul 26, 2023 20:40 CDT)

Natalie Bolton, Board Secretary

Jul 26, 2023

Date