

## 3.12 School Accounts

### 3.12.1 Charged Meal Policy (Adopted 11/17/22)

The goal of the Shelby County School District's Child Nutrition Program is to provide all students access to nutritious meals each school day, while also complying with all federal and state regulations. School districts participating in the National School Lunch Program must have a written Charged Meal Policy in place, developed with the input of stakeholder groups (i.e., parents, teachers, school administrators, etc.). This policy will be shared annually with appropriate school staff and communicated to parents/guardians during student enrollment, as part of the Meal Benefit Application, and will be available on our website.

In general, the student's parent/guardian is responsible for providing the funds to pay for school meals. However, if the necessary funds are not available on a given school day, the student will not be denied a reimbursable meal (this excludes adult and non-student meals which are not allowed to be charged). Extra food items that are not part of a meal, such as extra entrees, snacks, or ice cream, should not be charged. A record of unpaid meal charges must be maintained in accordance with USDA record retention requirements. The student's parent/guardian must pay delinquent debt accrued by unpaid meal charges by the end of each school year. At the end of each school year, delinquent debt will be reclassified as bad debt. Bad debt must be restored using non-federal funds. It is unlawful for a school's Child Nutrition Program to absorb bad debt from unpaid, charged meals.

Throughout the school year, as a student's unpaid meal charges accumulate (in excess of \$10.00), a board of education employee will follow the formal process of contacting a student's parent/guardian to obtain the needed funds for charged meals, and/or request that the parent/guardian complete the meal benefit application. When a student's outstanding balance exceeds \$25.00, an alternative reimbursable meal may be provided. If the student is without money for meals on a consistent basis, the administration should investigate the situation more closely and take further action if necessary. If financial hardship exists, households will be encouraged to apply for meal benefits. All monies collected from outstanding debts will be applied toward negative balances.

If parents/guardians are in need of financial assistance to pay for school meals, they are encouraged to apply for free and reduced price meals by completing the meal benefit application. Meal benefit applications are available at the student's school, the Central Office, and/or online at <http://www.myschoolapps.com>. The meal benefit application for free and reduced price meals takes just minutes to complete and may be completed at any time during the school year. A student's meal status is confidential.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to take advantage of the [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com) online pre-payment system, thus eliminating situations that could develop during meal time because of a student's failure to bring meal money to school. Through this secure website/mobile app parents/guardians can view meal account balances, purchases, make payments, and receive low balance notification. There is no cost to register, check balances, and/or view the student's purchases. A small service fee will be charged by <http://www.myschoolbucks.com> if money is deposited into the student's account.