

Student Meal Charge Policy

I. Purpose

The goal of the Bainbridge Guilford Central School is to provide student access to nutritious no- or low-cost meals each school day.

However, unpaid charges place a large financial burden on our school. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with federal requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program, and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances.

The intent of this policy is to establish procedures to address unpaid meal charges throughout the Bainbridge Guilford Central School. The provisions of this policy pertain to regular priced school breakfast and lunch meals only. The Bainbridge Guilford Central School provides this policy as a courtesy to those students in the event that they forget or lose their lunch money. Charging of items outside of the reimbursable meals (a la carte items, adult meals, etc.) is expressly prohibited.

II. Policy

- Free Meal Benefit - Free eligible students will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch each day. A la carte purchases must be paid/prepaid.
- Reduced Meal Benefit - Reduced eligible students will be allowed to receive a breakfast for a maximum \$.25 and lunch for \$.25 each day. A student will be allowed to charge a maximum of \$10 to their account after the balance reaches zero. The charge meals offered to students will be a peanut butter & jelly sandwich or a cheese sandwich in case of allergies, a piece of fruit and milk.
- Full Pay Students – Students will pay for meals at the school’s published paid meal rate each day. If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the administration will investigate the situation more closely and take further action as needed. If financial hardship exists, parents and families will be encouraged to apply for free or reduced price lunches for their child if applicable. A student will be allowed to charge a maximum of \$10 to their account after the balance reaches zero. The charge meals offered to students will a peanut butter & jelly sandwich or a cheese sandwich in case of allergies, a piece of fruit and milk.
- Parents/Guardians are responsible for meal payment to the food service program. Discreet notices of low or deficit balances will be sent to parents/guardians at regular intervals during the school year.
- Students/Parents/Guardians may pay for meals in advance via www.myschoolbucks.com or with a check payable to Bainbridge Guilford School Lunch Fund. Further details are available on our webpage at www.bgcds.org. Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a child may be without meal money on any given day. Any remaining funds for a particular student may/will be carried over to the next school year.
- Refunds for withdrawn, and graduating students – a written or e-mailed request for a refund of any money remaining in their account must be submitted. Students who are graduating at the end of the year will be given the option to transfer to a sibling’s account with a written request.
- Unclaimed Funds must be requested within one school year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the Bainbridge Guilford Central School Food Service Program.

- Balances Owed – Collection of owed balances will follow the policies and procedures set by the school.

If a student is without meal money on a consistent basis, the administration will investigate the situation more closely and take further action as needed. If financial hardship exists, parents and families are encouraged to apply for free or reduced price lunches for their child if applicable.

SED offers the following in terms of prohibited actions and actions that are in compliance:

Prohibited Actions	Required Actions
Announcing or publicizing the names of children with unpaid meal charges.	Communicating privately with individual families about their child’s outstanding balance.
Requiring children with unpaid meal charges to use a different serving line to pick up an alternate meal.	Serving children with unpaid meal charges the regular reimbursable meal or a reimbursable alternate meal in the same serving line
Using hand stamps, stickers, or other physical markers to identify children with meal charge debt.	Communicating payment reminders directly to adults in the family over the phone or via email (robocalls, MySchoolBucks, PayPams, etc.).
Sending clearly marked notices home with children who have an outstanding balance.	Sending discrete reminders in a plain, white envelope, or sending reminders with other communication materials sent to all families.
Enlisting volunteers, especially the parents or guardians of other students, to request payment from a family with unpaid meal charges.	Allowing only appropriate officials trained on USDA’s confidentiality requirements who have a need to access a child’s account balance or eligibility information to request payment from families with unpaid meal charges.
Suggesting or requiring children with unpaid meal charges to work for a meal or to pay back	Working with families to develop a payment plan to pay back meal charge debt.

Prohibited Actions	Required Actions
their debt.	
Throwing a child's meal in the trash if they are unable to pay.	Serving children who are unable to pay the regular reimbursable meal or a reimbursable alternate meal.
Serving unappealing alternate meals with low nutritional value as a strategy to embarrass children with unpaid meal debt.	Ensuring the alternate meal (if opting to provide one) is a healthy meal and is available as a regular alternate available to all children.