

ZACHARY COMMUNITY SCHOOL SYSTEM

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAM

MEAL DEBT COLLECTION PROCEDURES

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The Zachary Community School Board recognizes that healthy, nutritious meals are an important component to student readiness and ability to learn. However, unpaid meal debt places a financial strain on our Child Nutrition Program's budget.

The intent of this procedure is to establish methods of payment, charge availability, collection methods, refunds, and transfers.

The goals of this procedure are:

- To maintain the financial integrity of the all Child Nutrition Programs conducted in the Zachary Community School Board.
- To establish a consistent district procedure regarding the method of payment for extra items purchased during meal times, charge availability, collection methods, refunds, and transfers.
- To treat all students with dignity in the serving line regarding meal accounts.
- To support positive interactions with students, parent(s)/guardian(s), and district staff to the maximum extent possible.
- To establish procedures appropriate for students and staff.
- To encourage parent/guardian/adult students/staff to assume the responsibility of payments of extra items purchased.

COMMUNITY ELIGIBILITY PROGRAM:

What is the Community Eligibility Program, better known as CEP? It is a Federal Program that allows ALL students in the ZCSB to receive free breakfast and lunch meals. However, a school system must qualify for this program and, at this time, ZCSB does NOT qualify.

What is free? A reimbursable meal is free. A "reimbursable meal" is defined as a meal consisting of at least three (3) of the five meal components that are offered at lunch and must include a fruit and/or vegetable choice.

What is an extra? An extra is an item a student can purchase such as an extra slice of pizza, hamburger, and/or milk. In addition, an extra could be a wholesome snack. If your child purchases an extra item, there is a charge associated with that item. If you do not want your child to purchase any extra items, please contact the school cafeteria and speak with the manager. This information will be entered into the computer system and your child will not be allowed to purchase any extra items.

STUDENTS

METHODS OF PAYMENT:

The Zachary Community School Board will accept pre-payment in the form of cash, check, or money order. Payments can also be made online at myschoolbucks.com. Check should be made payable to Zachary Community School Board Child Nutrition Program or *ZCSB CNP*. If paying with a check, please write one check per school. In the memo section of the check, write the student's name – lunch money. For example: Jane Smith-lunch money. It is recommended for elementary students that the check or cash payments be placed in a sealed envelope that is labeled with the student's name, lunch money, and amount sent.

Students who pay each day, the cashier shall collect the money payment from the student and record in the computer the student's payment along with the student's ID for proper accounting purposes. We have a NO CHANGE policy so all monies given to the cashier will be put in the student's account. Students spend less time in line if charges for extra items are prepaid.

Students shall be allowed to pay by the week, the month, or the year. The cafeteria manager shall collect and record all advanced payments. Upon entering the payment information, the computer shall assign each student a number and shall keep a record of the financial status for students that have paid in advance.

Charging for extra items is not allowed. If a student is allowed to purchase extras, prepayment is required prior to purchasing.

Checks will ONLY be accepted through April 15th of each school year, no exceptions.

NSF CHECKS

An NSF check is a check that has been deposited in a student's account but returned to ZCSB CNP department by the bank as non-payable.

Upon receipt of an NSF check, the CNP purchasing agent edits the student's account for the amount of the check. The CNP purchasing agent keeps the NSF check and a copy of the student's account statement showing the before mentioned transaction, and enters the amount in the NSF checks spreadsheet.

The CNP purchasing agent shall call the parent/guardian of the student to notify the household of the NSF check. One attempt to contact the parent/guardian by telephone shall be made by the CNP purchasing agent.

The CNP purchasing agent shall collect the cash or a money order for the amount of the check. The cash or money order must be received within five (5) working days after the

parent/guardian receives notification. If the money has not been received within five (5) working days, the check shall be turned over to Check Care for collection.

UNPAID BALANCES:

If a student has a low balance, less than \$10.00, that is due, the school's cafeteria manager or assigned staff member will send a letter home indicating the amount due and/or call the household to inform the parent/guardian of amount due. If a student has a balance due greater than \$10.00, a letter will be sent home indicating the charges due. At this point the front office staff will start making calls to try to collect the overdue balance.

In the event a household is struggling to pay the balance, the cafeteria manager can arrange a payment plan. The cafeteria manager will then be responsible to follow up with the student's account until balance is paid.

At the end of the school year, any unpaid charges are reported to the school's office, Child Nutrition Supervisor, and the Superintendent.

The Cafeteria Manager will be responsible to document collection efforts and retain the document for current year plus the previous three (3) years. Manager will document who they spoke to, date, time, message, if they left a message, etc. This information will need to be readily available for audit by the Child Nutrition Supervisor and State of Louisiana Child Nutrition Program Staff.

ALTERNATE MEALS:

If a student's account reaches a balance of \$10.00, the household will be notified that the balance is due. If the balance is not paid, the student will receive an alternate meal of a cheese sandwich and milk or juice. The student will receive the alternate meal until the account is paid in full. Prior to the student being offered the alternate meal, the school manager will call the household and send home a letter explaining the alternate meal. The student will not be charged for the alternate meal.

REFUNDS OF STUDENT ACCOUNTS:

A written request is required for refunds, this may also be in the form of an email. Send requests to ZCSB Child Nutrition Program, 3755 Church Street, Zachary, LA, 70791 or email to Bianca Plant, bianca.plant@zacharyschools.org or Jacqueline Staden, jacqueline.staden@zacharyschools.org.

At the end of each school year, parents/guardians may receive a refund of unused money from the student's account prior to the last day of school. No refunds will be

given after June 30th of that year. Any remaining balance will be applied to the next school year.

TRANSFERS:

A written request is required for any transfers. A written request or email must be sent detailing the parents name and address, dollar value to be transferred, from which student, to which student and a contact name and phone number for the requesting parent in the event that there are any questions or complications. Send to ZCSB Child Nutrition Program, 3755 Church Street, Zachary, LA, 70791 or email to Bianca Plant, bianca.plant@zacharyschools.org or Jacqueline Staden, jacquelinestaden@zacharyschools.org.

USE OF STUDENTS ACCOUNTS:

Once money has been placed on a student's account, no one; sibling, friend, or parent may charge on that students account or use any funds in that account. The only person allowed to charge on a student's account is the student with the identification card matching the name on that account.

UNCLAIMED FUNDS:

A written request is required for all refunds. A written request or email must be sent detailing the parents name and mailing address, student's name, and reason for refund. Send to ZCSB Child Nutrition Program, 3755 Church Street, Zachary, LA, 70791 or email to Bianca Plant, bianca.plant@zacharyschools.org or Jacqueline Staden, jacquelinestaden@zacharyschools.org.

If you have another child in the school district, the balance may be transferred to him/her and will remain in the student's account for the following school year.

TEACHERS AND STAFF

METHODS OF PAYMENT:

The Zachary Community School Board will accept pre-payment in the form of cash, check, or money order. Check should be made payable to Zachary Community School Board Child Nutrition Program or *ZCSB CNP*.

Teachers and staff members can set up an account with the Child Nutrition Office to pay for meals. Once an account has been set up, teachers and staff members can then make payments online at myschoolbucks.com. Cash and checks will be accepted at the time of meal service.

The management of Child Nutrition Funds should be in accordance with sound business practices, including sound budgeting, purchasing, and accounting practices. Lending money to faculty members and school staff are prohibited uses of Child Nutrition Funds. Therefore, teachers and staff members will not be allowed to charge meals at any school cafeteria. As stated above, cash and checks will be accepted at the time of meal service.

If the Child Nutrition Office receives an NSF check from a ZCSB staff member, the staff member will no longer be allowed to pay for meals with a personal check.

Checks will ONLY be accepted through April 15th of each school year, no exceptions.

REFUNDS OF TEACHER ACCOUNTS:

A written request is required for refunds, this may also be in the form of an email. Send requests to ZCSB Child Nutrition Program, 3755 Church Street, Zachary, LA, 70791 or email to Bianca Plant, bianca.plant@zacharyschools.org or Jacqueline Staden, jacquelinestaden@zacharyschools.org.

At the end of each school year, you may receive a refund of unused money from your account prior to the last day of school. No refunds will be given after June 30th of that year. Any remaining balance will carry over to the next school year.

GUEST MEALS

METHODS OF PAYMENT:

The Zachary Community School Board will accept pre-payment in the form of cash, check, or money order. Check should be made payable to Zachary Community School Board Child Nutrition Program or *ZCSB CNP*.

Refunds are not given for guest meals.

Checks will ONLY be accepted through April 15th of each school year, no exceptions.

TRAINING

Child Nutrition Employees who are responsible for Point of Sale, Cafeteria Managers, and Assistant Managers will be required to read this procedure and sign and date the attached form which will indicate their understanding of this procedure. Annual training will be required with the above mentioned employees. Annually the above mentioned employees will be required to read and sign this procedure. A copy of which will be placed in their employee documentation file in the Child Nutrition Office.

MONITORING

On a monthly basis, the Child Nutrition Supervisor will assess the debts for both students and ZCSB staff for all schools. Any account over \$10.00 will be flagged and Cafeteria Managers will be required to report their collection efforts.