

***NEWLY PROPOSED ACPS REGULATION**

REGULATIONS FOR SCHOOL MEALS AND SNACKS

The Alexandria City School Board recognizes that students need adequate, nourishing food in order to learn, grow, and maintain good health. To reinforce the school division's nutrition education program, food sold during regular school hours (on school premises) will follow the [Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010](#).

Additionally, snacks and fundraisers during regular school hours and on school premises will follow the USDA's [Smart Snacks in School standards](#) unless qualifying for a "competitive foods" exemption as discussed below.

Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS) promotes high-quality school meals and snacks by:

- Involving students in the selection, tasting, and marketing of healthy foods and beverages that appeal to students;
- Providing a variety of food options, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy foods, which are low in fat and added sugars;
- Offering a variety of healthy choices that appeal to students, including cultural and ethnic favorites;
- Restricting student access to unhealthy foods in vending machines, school stores, and other venues that compete with healthy school meals; and
- Ensuring that healthy snacks and foods are provided in vending machines, school stores, and other venues within the division's control. The healthy options should cost the same or less than unhealthy alternatives.

ACPS strives to provide an environment conducive to good health by:

- Ensuring that drinking fountains are operable, clean, and convenient for use throughout the school day;
- Offering extracurricular physical activity programs, such as physical activity clubs, intramural programs, or interscholastic athletics;
- Discouraging the promotion and advertising of unhealthy foods; and
- Using non-food items rather than food items such as candy, cakes, soda, and foods high in fat, as incentives and rewards for good behavior or academic performance.

ACPS supports nutrition education and physical education by:

- Ensuring that qualified nutrition education and physical education specialists focus on knowledge and skill development so students are able to learn and adopt healthy eating and physical activity behaviors;
- Offering nutrition education in the school dining area(s) and in the classroom, with coordination between food service staff and teachers; and
- Eliminating any stigma attached to, and preventing public identification of, students who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

Unpaid Meal Charges

Students who do not have money on account or in hand to cover the cost of a meal at the time of service will be permitted to charge a full meal. Students will not be permitted to charge a la carte items. Reasonable efforts will be used to avoid calling attention to a student's inability to pay.

A. Notification

School nutrition services will notify the principal daily of any unpaid meal charges. For students with a negative account balance, the principal's designee will notify the parent/guardian in the parent's/guardian's preferred language weekly. After ten (10) meals have been charged, the principal will notify the parents/guardians by U.S. mail. Written notifications will include the amount of unpaid meal charges and information on replenishing the student's meal accounts, as well as contact information for assistance registering for free and reduced meal benefits. In addition, the principal will designate a member of the school support team to schedule a meeting with the parents/guardians to determine whether the student qualifies for free and reduced meal benefits. If outreach efforts are unsuccessful, further action may be taken.

ACPS' goal is to ensure the safety of all students. Therefore, ACPS may notify the Department of Social Services of suspected cases of child neglect.

B. Delinquent Accounts

For accounting purposes, delinquent debt (a student meal account with a negative balance) is allowable in the school nutrition program and may be carried over while the student is enrolled in ACPS. However, bad debt, defined as delinquent debt that is deemed uncollectible after the student is no longer enrolled in ACPS, is unallowable in the school nutrition program and cannot be carried over to the next school year.

The Superintendent ensures that federal child nutrition funds are not used to offset the cost of unpaid meals and that the child nutrition program is reimbursed for bad debt. In order to accomplish this, the following procedures are followed:

- Parents are expected to pay all meal charges in full by the last day of the school year.
- If payment of the negative balance is not received by the end of the school year, the debt may be turned over to the Superintendent or designee for collection. If the debt is not paid by the time the student leaves ACPS, it is considered bad debt for the purposes of federal law concerning unpaid meal charges.

C. Account Balance Refunds

Throughout the school year, parents/guardians may request the transfer or refund of positive student meal account balances by contacting the Nutrition Services school manager. On June 30 of each year, accounts for all graduating seniors, as well as for students no longer enrolled in ACPS, will be deemed inactive. Parents/guardians have up to one year (the following June 30) to request a transfer or refund of the balance by contacting Nutrition Services. After one year, the Department of Financial Services may treat remaining account balances as a donation to the Nutrition Services General Fund.

D. Policy Communication

This meal charge policy will be communicated to all students and parents/guardians by:

- Posting it on the ACPS website;
- Including it in the student welcome packet at the beginning of each school year and to all transfer students during the school year;
- Attaching it to the Free and Reduced Meal Benefits Application; and
- Including it with online payment system information materials.

In addition, this policy will be communicated to all staff prior to the first day of school. The Department of Nutrition Services must document its methods of communicating the policy to households and its training of staff responsible for its enforcement.

Competitive Foods

ACPS does not limit the frequency of “competitive food” sales (fundraising food sales) when they meet the nutrition standards specified by the [Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010](#) and the USDA’s [Smart Snacks in School standards](#).

A. Definitions

- “Competitive food” means all food and beverages other than meals reimbursed under programs authorized by the National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 available for sale to students on the school campus during the school day.
- “School campus” means all areas of the property under the jurisdiction of the school that are accessible to students during the school day.
- “School day” means the period from the midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day.

B. During School

In accordance with Policy JL, all fundraisers must be approved in advance by the school principal. All competitive food sold to students on the school campus during the school day must meet the nutrition standards specified by federal and state law and regulation.

- Exception: In accordance with the Virginia Board of Education’s (VBOE) *Resolution to Establish and Define Exemptions for School-Sponsored Fundraisers*, each school may conduct the following number of school-sponsored fundraisers during the school day per school year, during which food that does not meet the nutrition guidelines for competitive foods may be available for sale to students.
 - Elementary Schools: two (2) per year
 - Secondary Schools: one (1) per organization, not to exceed thirty (30) total per school per year

As outlined in VBOE’s *Resolution*, such fundraisers may not be held during breakfast or lunch periods.

C. After School

After the school day, the School Board grants schools the authority to decide what can be sold at these events when they are outside school hours, and permits exceptions for fundraisers when foods are not intended for consumption on school campus, as long as food safety handling and storage guidelines are followed.

ACPS is responsible for maintaining records that document compliance with this policy. Those records include receipts, nutrition labels and/or product specifications for the competitive food available for sale to students.

Established:

Legal Refs: U.S. Department of Agriculture, SP 46-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies, July 8, 2016.

U.S. Department of Agriculture, SP 47-2016, Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments, July 8, 2016.

Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ [22.1-78](#), [22.1-207](#)

Virginia Board of Education, A Resolution to Establish and Define Exemptions for School-Sponsored Fundraisers Pending Incorporation in the Proposed Regulations Governing Nutritional Guidelines for Competitive Foods Available for Sale in the Public Schools (Nov. 19, 2015).

Cross Refs: EFB Free and Reduced Price Food Services
IGAE/IGAF Health Education/Physical Education
JHCF Student Wellness
JHCF-R Wellness Guidelines for the Alexandria City Public Schools
JHCF-R2 Food Allergy Guidelines
JHCH School Meals and Snacks
JL Fund Raising and Solicitation
KQ Commercial, Promotional, and Corporate Sponsorships and Partnerships