

Mercer County Technical School District

School Nutrition Program Negative Balance Procedures

In order to provide students and parents/guardians in the Mercer County Technical School District with the best possible service, clarity, and accountability surrounding the school nutrition program, the following procedures regarding student meal account balances will be implemented effective July 1, 2017:

1. The Mercer County Technical School District and Sodexo Food Service encourage parents/guardians to pre-pay meals for their children, thereby eliminating situations that could develop during mealtime over negative balances. Pre-payments for breakfast and lunch can be made via cash or check (made payable to **Mercer County Special Services School District**).
2. Students wanting a meal and not having money to purchase a meal will be allowed to charge a meal, with repayment expected within one (1) or two (2) school days.
3. Students may charge their accounts only for a reimbursable meal or milk – **students will not be permitted to charge a la carte items or an extra meal**. A maximum of \$10.00 will be allowed to be charged prior to implementation of the meal replacement policy (which may consist of Sunnybutter & Jelly sandwich OR a cheese sandwich (Sunnybutter is a sunflower seed butter that is processed at a nut-free facility)).
4. Once a student has reached a charged balance of \$10.00 with no repayment that student will receive a lunch consisting of a Sunnybutter & Jelly sandwich OR a cheese sandwich and milk in place of a lunch menu choice. Students should not go through the regular meal line but should proceed directly to the cashier if they are not eligible to charge any more meals.
5. A list of negative account balances of more than \$10.00 will be forwarded to each School Supervisor and/or Secretary by the Business Office as deemed necessary. The School will send letters to students whose balances exceed \$10.00. Once balance notification has been sent out, parents/guardians will have ten (10) days from the date of the notification to pay or make arrangements to pay outstanding student balances.
6. If the student's negative balance has not been addressed by the parents/guardians within the ten (10) day period, a second notification will be sent indicating that after an additional eight (8) days, the student **will not be provided with any meals** until such balance has been addressed.
7. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to submit free/reduced meal application forms yearly, as well as, when their household information or income changes. Applications can be submitted at any time and are available during registration and the student's school, as well as, on the district's website: www.MCTS.edu. Free/reduced applications will also become a part of all paperwork provided to families of students transferring to Mercer County Technical Schools. While MCTS and Sodexo strongly encourage families to apply for free/reduced meal benefits, the final application responsibility lies with the parents/guardians.
8. In extreme hardship situations the building administrator may authorize a one-time exception to the charge policy by providing the student with a signed authorization form to be presented to the cashier at lunch.
9. Both the MCTS and Sodexo are committed to providing meals to students who choose to participate in the program. However, there is a responsibility on the part of the students and parents/guardians to satisfy all financial obligations to the lunch program in a timely manner.
10. The school Principal or designee has the option to take further action as outlined in MCTS Policy 8550 (attached).

Questions regarding the school policy and the above noted procedures should be directed to your child's school principal or the MCTS School Business Administrator, Debbie Donnelly at 609-586-2123.