



# Henry County Schools

## “Nourishing Student Achievement”

# School Nutrition Program

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### Meal Charge Procedure

Henry County Schools participate in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program that permits the school system to offer free and reduced priced meals to students who qualify. The School Nutrition Program (SNP) is a self-sustaining enterprise through the local board of education. Therefore, the program must rely on meal payments and federal/state reimbursements to fund the program.

#### **Purpose of this Criteria/Procedure:**

State Rule 160-5-6-.01 STATEWIDE SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAM requires the School Food Authority (SFA) to make school meals available to every student in attendance between the hours of 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. State and Federal regulations require payment for school meals to paid and/or reduced-price students unless the SFA or school has been approved to be in the Special Assistance Certification and Reimbursement Alternative Provision. Federal regulations prevent the denial of a meal to a student eligible for free meals, except under certain circumstances, such as when the parent has refused the program benefit.

The local SFA will ensure that the charge procedure is available to all stakeholders through student handbooks and web site.

#### **Payment Responsibility for Free/Reduced Price Meal Applicants:**

It is the parent’s/guardian’s responsibility to provide the means for their student to be properly fed and ready to learn. In order to do this, parents have four options:

- Establish a meal account with LINQ Connect at [www.linqconnect.com](http://www.linqconnect.com) and maintain a positive balance to cover meal charges.
- Provide money for the student or students to purchase a school meal
- Complete the free/reduced application to determine eligibility of meal benefits
- Provide a lunch from home

All students are eligible to apply for free or reduced price meal benefits. Federal guidelines allow school systems a maximum of **ten (10) days** to approve a new free and reduced price meal application once received. No student is allowed a free or reduced price meal without a

current approved application on file in the School Nutrition Department. Parents/guardians who apply for free and reduced price meal benefits are responsible for payment of all school meals and accumulated charges until approval is granted. Once approval is granted, parents will receive a notification letter of a student's eligibility showing the effective date. If a notification letter is not received within ten (10) days, parents should check with the School Nutrition Central Office to see if the free and reduced application has been received.

### **Prepayment Options:**

School breakfast and lunch accounts can be funded through multiple methods:

- Cash or check payments to the cafeteria. Please note that Henry County Schools uses CHECKredi Payment Services as our check guarantee program for returned checks.
- LINQ Connect ([www.linqconnect.com](http://www.linqconnect.com)) using a debit or credit card in any amount.

All monies paid will be deposited into the student's account. Any/all monies given to the cafeteria will first be applied towards all outstanding charge balances. Students with meal charges will not be allowed other purchases, such as a la carte, extra milk and etc. Parents can view their student's meal account balance in LINQ Connect.

### **Meal Charge Procedure:**

Elementary Schools – maximum of **\$18.75**

Middle Schools – **\$5.20**

High Schools – **\$5.20**

Adults – **No charges**

A La Carte Items – **No charges**

### **Excessive Charges/ Courtesy Meal:**

It is the desire of the SNP that all students receive a healthy meal. Parents and/or guardians are responsible to provide the means for their child (ren) to be properly fed and ready to learn. In the event any student has reached the maximum charge limit, (\$18.75 for Elementary, \$5.20 for Middle, and \$5.20 for High) the student may be offered a courtesy meal. **The courtesy meal will include a sandwich, fresh fruit, and milk.**

The alternative meal will be entered at the POS using the courtesy meal key. The meal will also be tracked in the production record at the school by the manager.

### **Manager Responsibility:**

It is the goal of the SNP to communicate the charges with parents and school administration. Managers should print a list of students who have reached the maximum meal charge daily and identify the student to receive an alternative meal prior to getting a tray. Managers should offer/issue the courtesy meal in such a way as not to cause embarrassment to a child. They should also avoid taking food from a student and discarding it in their presence. Student's meal benefit status should remain confidential at all times. Managers should make every effort to identify these students and contact the parents prior to them reaching the point of sale.

Managers are also responsible to ensure all school nutrition personnel including cashiers are trained to consistently enforce the school's charge policy.

Principals have the discretion to reimburse school lunch charges or create a school funded account that maintains a positive balance to cover the cost of student meals without funds to prevent the courtesy meal. These meals will be at the adult meal price since reimbursement from USDA will not be provided considering this is not a student account.

**Parental Notification:**

The School Nutrition Department has partnered with Technology to send home automatic notifications to parents and guardians regarding charge balances using Infinite Campus. Notifications will be sent both via e-mail and phone calls to contact in Infinite Campus. Notifications will be sent once per week and include any student who has the following:

- Balance less than \$10 AND account used within last 10 days (Low Balance Reminder)
- Balance less than \$0 regardless of usage (Negative Balance Reminder)

**Check Guarantee Program:**

Henry County Schools has implemented a check guarantee program service provider. CHECKredi Payment Services has been selected to provide this service. Please be aware that if your check is returned, it may be re-presented electronically. Also, in presenting a check for payment, you authorize service charges and processing fees to be debited from the same account should the check be dishonored. These fees, as permitted by state law, may be debited as a paper draft or an electronic funds transfer, at our option. Each dishonored item is subject to the applicable state returned check fees. Specifically, per Georgia Code Annotated § 13-6-15, the service fee for returned checks is as follows:

- \$30 or 5% of the instrument, plus the amount of any fees charged to the holder of the instrument by a bank or financial institution as a result of the instrument not being honored.

(Note that the fee structure will change according to any amendments made to GA law during a school year.) If you wish to inquire about a returned check written to Henry County Schools, please contact CHECKredi Payment Services directly at the information listed below.

Customers (check writers) with returned check inquiries should contact:

CHECKredi Payment Services

Tel 877-524-7334, or 256-890-3440

Fax 256-890-3458

P.O. Box 3829

Huntsville, AL 35810-3829

customerservice@checkredi.com

## **USDA Nondiscrimination Statement:**

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**  
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**  
[program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

**Revised: School Year 2023-2024**