

## **SCHOOL MEALS AND SNACKS**

The Gloucester County School Board recognizes that students need adequate, nourishing food in order to learn, grow and maintain good health.

### **Generally**

To reinforce the division's nutrition education program, foods sold during regular school hours on school premises will be:

- carefully selected so as to contribute to students' nutritional well-being and the prevention of disease;
- prepared in ways that will appeal to students, retain nutritive quality, and foster lifelong healthful eating habits; and
- served in age-appropriate quantities and at reasonable prices.

The Gloucester County School Board 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.

The Gloucester County School Board strives to provide an environment conducive to good health by:

- allowing an adequate amount of time and space for students to eat school meals;
- scheduling lunch periods at reasonable hours around midday;
- 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;
- 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; and
- encouraging parents to support the division's nutrition education efforts by considering nutritional quality when selecting any snacks which they may donate for occasional class parties.

The Gloucester County School Board 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.

**Meals and Snacks**

Meals and snacks offered as part of the National School Lunch Program or the School Breakfast Program meet, at a minimum, the requirements established by state and federal law and regulation.

Schools make potable water available and accessible without restriction to children at no charge in the place(s) where lunches are served during the meal service.

**Unpaid Meal Charges**

All reasonable efforts will be used at all times to avoid calling attention to a student's inability to pay.

Students who do not have money on account or in hand to cover the cost of a meal at the time of service may be permitted to charge the meal or may be given an alternative meal/meal equivalent.

Students may charge no more than 3 meals/meal equivalents to their accounts. Generally this does not include individual a la carte or extra items, unless approved.

Students carrying a negative balance of \$10.00 or more will not be permitted to make any more charges, however, they will be provided an alternative meal/meal equivalent for that day. Also, students who have a negative balance, but have money on hand intended for that day's meal, will be permitted to utilize up to the entire amount for that day's meal/meal equivalent purchase.

The superintendent, or superintendent's designee, will ensure 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.

**Notifying Household of Low or Negative Balances in Student Cafeteria Accounts**

Notices of low or negative balances in a student's meal account will be sent to parents and the school principal. Parents are expected to pay all meal charges in full by the last day of the school year. The type of notification may include, but not be limited to: (a) call alerts, (b) letters, and/or (c) electronic correspondence. In some cases, letters will be sent home with students. One or more notification methods will be triggered automatically after five (5) charges and/or meal equivalent charges.

Notifications will include: (a) unpaid amount (\$), (b) expected payment date(s), (c) consequences of non-payment, and (d) who to contact with questions or to request financial assistance.

If a parent regularly fails to provide meal money or send food to school with the student and the student does not qualify for free or reduced benefits the child nutrition director (or other school division designee) will inform the principal, who will determine the next course of action, which may include notifying the department of social services of suspected child neglect and/or taking legal steps to recover the unpaid meal charges.

Delinquent debt is allowable in the Gloucester County Public Schools Nutrition Program and may be carried over to one successive school year. The School Food Authority may also source alternative methods to collect on delinquent accounts via outside private, civic, or other charitable organizations.

## **Competitive Foods**

### **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.

All competitive food sold to students on the school campus during the school day meets the nutrition standards specified by federal and state law and regulation.

The Gloucester County School Board 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.

**ADOPTED:** December 9, 2014

**REVISED:** June 13, 2017

**LEGAL REFERENCES:** 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, 22.1-207.4

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 REFERENCES:**

EFB	Free and Reduced Price Food Services
IC/ID	School Year/School Day
IGAE/IGAF	Health Education/Physical Education
JHCF	Student Wellness
JL	Fund Raising and Solicitation
KQ	Commercial, Promotional, and Corporate Sponsorships and Partnerships

School Health Advisory Board’s *Health and Wellness Guidelines* (Rev. 10/2014)