

## SCHOOL MEALS AND SNACKS

The Essex 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 to students 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 Essex 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 Essex 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 Essex 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.

### Nutritional Guidelines

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.

Competitive foods, as defined herein, comply with state and federal requirements.

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.

### 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. Competitive foods meet the nutrient guidelines established by the Board of Education, including the guidelines for calories, fat, sugar and sodium.

"Fundraiser" means a school-sponsored activity where food or nonfood items are sold on the school campus during regular school hours by a school-sponsored organization to raise money for a school-related program or activity. One fundraiser is defined as one or more fundraising activities by one or more school-sponsored organizations that last one school day. If multiple school-sponsored organizations conduct fundraisers on the same day, the combined activities are counted as one fundraiser. If a fundraising activity lasts more than one school day, each subsequent day's activity is considered as one fundraiser and counts toward the total number of permitted fundraisers.

“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.

### School Sponsored Fundraisers

Each school may conduct 30 school-sponsored fundraisers per school year during which food that does not meet the nutrition guidelines for competitive foods may be available for sale to students. Fundraisers are not conducted during school meal service times.

### Advertising and Marketing

Essex County School Division permits the marketing and advertising of only foods that meet the nutrition guidelines for competitive foods, serve to promote student health, prevent childhood obesity, and combat problems associated with poor nutrition and physical inactivity.

### 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 may be permitted to charge the meal only (no ala carte). Students may charge no more than \$16.50 to their accounts.

A student carrying a negative balance of \$16.50 or more is not permitted to charge any additional amounts. A student who is not permitted to charge any additional amounts is permitted to buy a meal if the student has cash on hand. Reasonable efforts are used to avoid calling attention to a student's inability to pay.

Notices of low or negative balances in a student's meal account are 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.

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 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.

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 those goals, the following procedures are followed:

- At least one written notice is provided to a student and the student's parent or guardian prior to the student being denied reimbursable meals for exceeding the division's charge limit.

- If payment of the negative balance is not received within 30 working days of the maximum charge limit being reached, the debt will be turned over to the superintendent or superintendent's designee for collection. If the debt is not paid by fiscal year end, it is considered bad debt for the purposes of federal law concerning unpaid meal charges.

Students who cannot pay for a meal at school or who owe a school meal debt are not required to do chores or other work to pay for such meal or wear a wristband or hand stamp.

#### Recordkeeping

The Essex County School Board is responsible for maintaining records that document compliance with this policy. Those records include documentation used to assess the nutritional profile of food items and determine whether a food item is an allowable complete food, such as recipes, nutrition labels and/or product specifications for the competitive food available for sale to students.

The School Board is also responsible for

- maintaining records documenting compliance with the competitive food nutrition standards for food available for sale in areas that are outside of the control of the school nutrition programs operations
- ensuring any organization or school activity designated as responsible for food service at the various venues in the school, other than the school nutrition programs, maintains records documenting compliance with the competitive food nutrition standards
- maintaining records each school year documenting the number of exempt fundraisers, if any, conducted at each school within the division
- designating an individual at the division or school level to monitor and ensure compliance with this policy in all areas that are outside the control of the school nutrition programs operation. The designee may not be a school nutrition personnel.

Adopted: April 9, 2012

Revised: December 11, 2017

Revised: October 8, 2018

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Legal Refs: 42 U.S.C. § 1758.

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.

7 C.F.R. 210.11.

Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, §§ 22.1-78, 22.1-79.7, 22.1-207.4.

8 VAC 20-740-10.

8 VAC 20-740-30.

8 VAC 20-740-35.

8 VAC 20-740-40.

Cross Refs:	EFB	Free and Reduced Price Food Services
	IGAE/IGAF	Health Education/Physical Education
	JHCF	Student Wellness
	JL	Fund Raising and Solicitation
	KG	Sales and Solicitations in Schools
	KJ	Advertising in the Schools
	KQ	Commercial, Promotional and Corporate Sponsorships and Partnerships