

## CAFETERIA

The Elmore County Public Schools Child Nutrition Program (CNP) is in compliance with the State Department of Education Wellness Guidelines. The Elmore County School Board recognizes that students need adequate, nourishing food in order to learn, grow, and maintain good health. All meals served meet patterns established by the National School Breakfast and Lunch Program and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Our goal is to assist in reducing the concerns of obesity in school age children. Students who need substitutions or special diets must have a Medical Statement/Diet Prescription form completed by a state recognized medical professional, which are available through the school nurse or the school office. Every school in Elmore County serves breakfast and lunch each operating day. Students who qualify may receive free meals or reduced price meals. Parents/Guardians may complete the Free and Reduced Meal Benefit Application at any time during the school year. New applications must be submitted each school year. Applications are available in the school office, CNP Office, or Online at [www.myschoolapps.com](http://www.myschoolapps.com). All paper applications will be scanned for processing as the application arrives in the CNP Office. The CNP office is allowed 10 working days to process an application after it reaches the CNP office. **Parents should be prepared to pay for meals until their child's application is processed and the cafeteria or parent is notified of the results.** Incomplete applications will be returned through the students, so please follow the directions carefully to avoid any delays in processing.

### MEAL PRICES

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH
Paying Student	\$1.50	\$2.50
Reduced Price	\$0.30	\$0.40
BOE Employees	\$2.00	\$3.25
Visitor	\$2.50	\$3.75
Milk	\$.50	\$.50

Menus are provided monthly and can be found on the Elmore County Public Schools website under Child Nutrition. Menus are subject to change based on food availability. Students may purchase extra food items in each cafeteria. À la carte items and pricing vary among schools. **No glass items or carbonated drinks are allowed in the school cafeteria. Foods and drinks brought into the cafeteria in competitive packaging, i.e. fast foods, are prohibited.** A lunch number (POS#) is established for each student. Parents may pay for meals online at [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com), or with cash or personal check: daily, weekly, or monthly. Our check policy is as follows:

1. The total amount of the check will be deposited into your child's lunch account and cannot be used to pay for other school items such as field trips, library fees, etc.,
2. The Elmore County Child Nutrition Program recognizes that occasionally a parent may inadvertently overdraw a checking account and a check may be returned by your bank. In order

to recover these funds in a private and professional manner, CNP has contracted with Nexcheck, LLC, for collection of returned checks.

a. Checks should be written on a commercially printed check with your name, address, and contact telephone number. When a person writes a check to a lunchroom he or she agrees that, if the check is returned for any reason, it may be represented electronically on the same account, and that the Service Fee for returned checks established by law may be debited from the same account.

b. If the check and fee are not collected electronically, Nexcheck will contact the check writer by mail and/or by telephone to make payment arrangements. All payments need to be made directly to Nexcheck, P.O. Box 19688, Birmingham, AL 35219. For a convenience fee, payments of both check and fee may be made electronically at [www.nexcheck.com](http://www.nexcheck.com) or over the phone (800-639-2435) using a credit card, debit card or electronic check.

### ***Charge Policy***

We realize that sometimes a parent and/or student will forget to bring money to pay for meals. However, federal and state Child Nutrition guidelines prohibit schools from allowing students to accrue charges.

Please remember the following items regarding charges:

All meals must be paid for in advance of consuming them. Your child(ren) should bring money first thing Monday morning. Please pay for a minimum of one week at a time, if at all possible. We suggest keeping at least \$5-7 in your child's account at all times, if you are a full-paying or reduced-paying household. There is NO charge for utilizing the My School Bucks website to view a student's account balance, activity or to receive low balance emails. There is a small transaction fee to deposit funds into a student's account; however, you can allocate funds to more than one student account per deposit. The site can be accessed at [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com). Please utilize this helpful and convenient service.

Children that accrue charges will have written notifications sent home weekly.

Students whose parents have applied for Free and Reduced Meals must still pay for meals until approval is official. Benefits are not retro-active. Parents are responsible for ALL meals their child(ren) eat until official approval is made by the Child Nutrition office. This can take up to 10 days. A notification letter will be sent home. Parents who are waiting for approval from the Child Nutrition office for Free and Reduced meals must provide for student meals by sending money or packing a lunch.

In the past, children have been allowed to charge in the case that they had forgotten their lunch money. Federal and State Child Nutrition guidelines prohibit the school from allowing students to accrue excessive charges. State regulations prohibit schools from denying K-3 students and students with disabilities a meal when funds are not available. Therefore, elementary students and students with disabilities who have 5 unpaid meal charges will be

given an alternate meal which will include a turkey or cheese sandwich (cereal at breakfast), fruit and milk until full payment is received. Middle school and high school students will not be allowed to charge more than 5 meals and will not have the option of receiving an alternate meal.

If you have questions concerning the charges, please call the CNP Office at (334) 567-1222 or toll free 1-844-685-9054.

**MY SCHOOL BUCKS:** Parents have the opportunity to deposit money directly into their child's lunch accounts using their banking information or debit/credit cards. There is a transaction fee for each deposit; however, you can allocate money to more than one child per deposit. For additional information and instructions go to the [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com) website or visit the Elmore County Schools Website at [www.elmoreco.com](http://www.elmoreco.com) or contact the CNP Office at 334-567-1222.

**ON-LINE APPLICATION:** Parents may complete an application for Free and Reduced Meal Benefits online at [www.myschoolapps.com](http://www.myschoolapps.com), a link to the site is also located on the Elmore County Schools Website ([www.elmoreco.com](http://www.elmoreco.com)) under Student/Parent Resources. Please follow the instructions for the application to be sent directly to the CNP office. You will receive a confirmation number once the application has been sent to our office. All precautions have been taken to make this process secure.

### ***Unpaid Meal Charges***

The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs are integral in ensuring that students have access to nutritious meals to support their academic success. It is also imperative to protect the financial stability of school nutrition program.

The intent of this policy is to establish a process and procedure to handle situations when children eligible for reduced-price or full-price meal benefits have insufficient funds to pay for school meals; as well as for the collection of unpaid meal charges and delinquent account debt.

- Students who qualify for free meals will not be denied a reimbursable meal even if they have accrued a negative balance on their cafeteria account.
- Students who have money to pay for a reduced-price or full price meal at the time of service must be provided a meal. If the student intended to use the money for that day's meal, the School Food Authority (SFA) will not use the money to repay a negative balance or other unpaid meal charge debt.
- Students without funds to pay for a reduced-price or full price meal are allowed to charge breakfast or lunch.
- Students are allowed to charge up to 5 meals.
- A la carte items may not be charged for any reason.
- Students who charge a meal will receive a reimbursable meal.
- Employees of Elmore County Public Schools are not allowed to charge a meal.
- Guests/Visitors of Elmore County Public Schools are not allowed to charge a meal.

### ***Communicating the Policy***

- The unpaid meal charges policy will be posted on the Elmore County Public Schools website, will be included in the Child Nutrition Program (CNP) information packet distributed at the

beginning of the school year and will be provided to all transfer students during the school year. The Household Application for Free and Reduced Price Meals will be attached.

- The unpaid meal charges policy will be communicated to all faculty and staff prior to the first day of school.
- Child Nutrition Program staff will receive training on the unpaid meal charges policy and a record of the training will be maintained as part of the professional development portfolio.

### ***Notification of Negative Balance***

- The Child Nutrition Program (CNP) staff will notify households of negative balances. The School Nutrition Manager or designee will be responsible for contacting households via telephone, by US mail or by sending a letter home with the student.
- Written notifications to households will include the amount of unpaid meal charges, expected payment dates, the consequences of non-payment and where to go for questions or assistance. Written notifications will be sent home on a weekly basis with each student whose account has a negative balance.

### ***Assistance to Households***

- Households with questions or needing assistance may contact the Child Nutrition Program office at: (334) 567-1222, 100 H.H. Robison Drive, Wetumpka 36092, or email the CNP Director at [ElmoreCNP@elmoreco.com](mailto:ElmoreCNP@elmoreco.com).

### ***Bad Debt***

- Bad debt is defined as delinquent debt that is deemed uncollectible at the end of the school year. Bad debt is unallowable in the Child Nutrition Program and cannot be carried over to the next school year. Funds resulting from bad debt cannot be recovered using CNP funds or the District's general fund. Bad debt must be paid using non-public funding sources.
- Bad debt must be restored to the CNP account prior to the end of the same fiscal year.
- When a household has reached a threshold of 5 unpaid meal charges for a student, collection procedures will be initiated.
- CNP staff will send a letter to the household with the amount of debt and date of expected payment.
- If payment or arrangements to pay have not been satisfied, CNP staff will report the debt to school administration. The school administration will contact the household and attempt to collect the debt.
- If payment is not received and/or 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 Manager 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.