

Section 5-5.2. Adequate nutrition program required; annual agreements; eligibility determinations; public announcement required; amendments to policy. —

A. An adequate nutrition program is essential to a child's growth and development and influences a child's achievement in school. With this in mind, the School Board is of the opinion that every school age child should have an adequate lunch, and that the School Board should serve free breakfasts and lunches to eligible children.

B. The School Board will enter into an annual agreement with the State Department of Education for the operation of the school breakfast and lunch program, which obligates Suffolk Public Schools to observe the standards and minimum operating requirements established under the National School Lunch Act. Suffolk Public Schools provides free breakfasts and lunches to students according to the terms of the National School Lunch Program, the National School Breakfast Program, the Summer Food Service Program, and the Child and Adult Care Feeding Program.

C. In accordance with federal law and the revised regulations of the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Acts, the School Board will carry out all statutory requirements and accepts responsibility for providing free meals to children in the schools. School officials determine student eligibility based on guidelines established by federal law. Eligible students are provided nutritionally acceptable meals if state and federal resources for school food programs are available. The superintendent or superintendent's designee establishes regulations or procedures as needed to implement this policy.

D. The criteria for determining a student's eligibility and the procedures for securing free meals are publicly announced at the beginning of each school year and provided to parents of all children in attendance at Suffolk Public Schools.

E. Employees of the School Board are prohibited from

- (i) requiring a student who cannot pay for a meal at school or who owes a school meal debt to throw away or discard a meal after it has been served to the student, do chores, or other work to pay for such meals or wear a wristband or hand stamp;
- (ii) physically segregating, overtly identifying, or otherwise discriminating against any child eligible for free meals; or
- (iii) denying any student the opportunity to participate in any extracurricular activity because the student cannot pay for a meal at school or owes a school meal debt.

If any school in the division has a student population that qualifies for free and reduced-price meals at a minimum percentage of 50 percent in the prior school year and simultaneously offers educational or enrichment activities, the School Board applies to the Virginia Department of Education for such school to participate in the Afterschool Meal Program administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition (FNS) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to subsequently and simultaneously serve federally reimbursable meals and offer an afterschool education or enrichment program pursuant to FNS guidelines and state health and safety standards.

F. The School Board may solicit and receive any donation or other funds for the purpose of eliminating or offsetting any school meal debt at any time and will use any such funds solely for such purpose.

G. Any amendments or changes to this policy will be submitted to the State School Lunch Office for approval prior to it taking effect in Suffolk Public Schools. When changes occur during the school year, parents and the news media will be notified. (Adopted August 10, 1995; Revised November 9, 2017; Ordinance Number 17/18-14; Effective

Date: November 9, 2017; Ordinance Number 19/20-26; Revised/Effective Date: November 14, 2019; Ordinance 20/21-25; Revised/Effective Date: May 13, 2021)

Legal Authority - Virginia Code §§ 22.1-79.7, 22.1-207.2:2, 22.1-207.3, 22.1-207.4, and 63.2-1509 (1950), as amended.