**Policy on Unpaid Meal Charges**

To ensure students receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day, the District shall maintain a meal charge program that minimizes identification of children with insufficient funds to pay for school meals and maintain the financial integrity of the district food service fund account. Further, the District shall abide by program regulation 7 CFR 245.5 by providing parents and guardians of all children who attend the school in the District information regarding the availability of reimbursable school meals and must be provided, in writing, information about applying for free and reduced price meals. The District will promote activities to involve students and parents or guardians in the school meal programs and inform families about the availability of all District meal programs. The District shall include students, families and the school community in establishing and developing a communication plan for the District’s meal charge policy that complements the public announcement of meal eligibility requirements in 7 CFR 245.5 and is consistent with the involvement required in 78 CFR 210.12.

It is the policy of *Chandler Unified School District* to provide a complete meal to all students. In the event a student’s account has insufficient funds to pay for the meal, the account is charged. Parents/guardians shall be contacted for payment through phone calls and written notification.

* Students in kindergarten through grade six (6) will be allowed to accrue a negative balance while efforts are made to collect the account deficiency.
* À la carte purchases are not permitted when the account is in a negative balance
* Students and grade 7 – 12 will not be allowed to accrue a negative balance in the meal system (i.e. no meals may be charged in secondary meal service)

When a negative account balance exceeds the dollar amount equivalent to ten lunches:

* The Principal will be notified.
* A social worker and/or designated staff member of Nutrition Services will contact the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to determine an appropriate resolution of the circumstance.
* The student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be provided application materials for the reduce-price and free meal programs.

If it is determined the district is unsuccessful in collecting payment, the debt may be handed over to a collection agency.

At least one (1) advance written communication shall be given to the student and parent/guardian prior to providing additional meals beyond the conditions established by the District. The written communication shall explain the procedure should the student not have sufficient funds to pay for a meal.

The District shall make a reasonable effort to collect unpaid meal charges classified as delinquent debt. The District shall ensure that efforts to collect delinquent debt do not have a negative impact on the student involved. Such efforts shall focus primarily on the parents or guardians responsible for providing for the student’s funds for meals. When the District determines that collection efforts for delinquent debt are useless or too costly, the debt must be reclassified as “bad debt” as defined in 2 CFR 200-426. Bad debt must be written off as operating loss. However, “bad debt” must be restored using non-federal funds. Delinquent meal charges that are converted to “bad debt” must be recorded and maintained in accordance with record retention requirements in 7 CFR 210.9(b)(17) and 7 CFR 210-15(b).