

## **Duncan Unified School District Meal Charge Policy**

Title 7, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 210.10(a)(1) General Nutrition Requirements states "Schools must provide nutritious and well-balanced meals to all the children they serve." In accordance with this regulation, the Duncan Unified School District will not deny any student access to school lunch. However, the district's Food and Nutritional Services department is a self supporting fund that shall not have a negative balance at the close of a fiscal year. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the Food and Nutritional Services department and on the district's operating budget. To be fair and equitable and in order to ensure compliance of all who participate in the school meal program, the policy establishes procedures for methods of payment, charge availability and collection methods.

**For Students with Free Lunch Status:** The federal school lunch program allows a qualifying student to receive a free school lunch every day. Students are required to take a reimbursable meal. Items sold on an a la carte basis are not part of the USDA program and must be paid for with cash. A la carte items cannot be charged.

**For Students with Reduced Lunch Status:** The federal school lunch program allows a qualifying student to receive a reimbursable meal at the reduced price of \$0.40. Students are required to take a reimbursable meal. Items sold on an a la carte basis are not part of the USDA program and must be paid for with cash. A la carte items cannot be charged. Students with reduced price lunch status will be allowed to charge reimbursable meals up to \$3.00 before the collection process begins.

**For Students with Paid Lunch Status:** Prices for school lunch are set by the Duncan Unified School District School in accordance to federal and state regulations. A la carte items cannot be charged but may be purchased with cash. The collection process will start when the student account shows a deficit of \$5.00.

## **The Collection Process:**

**Step 1:** When the charge amount exceeds the amounts set above, the Cafeteria Manager or designee will send a letter, email or text to the parent(s)/guardian(s) requesting immediate payment.

**Step 2:** If a student's status is set as "paid" and the account balance exceeds -\$40.00, or a "reduced" meal status account exceeds -\$20, the administration will prohibit participation by the student in any future fee-based program (sports, field trips, etc.) until or unless the deficit balance is paid in full.

**Step 3:** If the parent(s)/guardian(s) has not made any payments in an effort to reduce the negative balance or fails to bring the student's account in good standing within thirty (30) days, the administration may:

- \* Refer the account to a collection agency. (Parent will receive a letter notifying them of this)
- \* Initiate a claim in the court system.

**Additional Steps:** If a student's account is not in good standing at the end of the school year, the administration may take one or more of the following actions, unless or until prohibited by state law or regulation:

- \* Delay the issuance of report cards, transfer cards, and class assignments until or unless the negative or delinquent balance is paid in full.
- \* Prohibit the student's participation or other students in the student's household from participating in any future fee or charge-based program until or unless the negative or delinquent balance is paid in full.

**If a senior's account is not in good standing as of May 1st, the administration may prohibit the student from participation in senior activities and/or graduation exercises.**