

Business and Non-Instructional Operations**Auxiliary Services****Free and Reduced Price Meals**

The Watertown Unified School District has agreed to participate in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs and accepts responsibility for providing free and reduced price meals to eligible children in the schools under its jurisdiction.

The Board of Education assures the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction that the school system will uniformly implement the following policy to determine children's eligibility for free and reduced price meals in all schools under its jurisdiction or where applicable. In fulfilling the responsibilities, the Board:

- A. Agrees to serve meals free to children from families whose income is at or below the free scale as established by the Secretary's Income Eligibility Guidelines.
- B. Agrees to serve meals at a reduced price to children from households whose income is at or below the reduced price scale of the Secretary's Income Eligibility Guidelines.
- C. Agrees that there will be no physical segregation of, nor any other discrimination against, any child because of his/her inability to pay the full price of the meal. The names of the children eligible to receive free or reduced price meals shall not be published, posted, or announced in any manner, and there shall be no overt identification of any such children by use of special tokens, tickets or any other means. Further assurance is given that children eligible for free or reduced price meals shall not be required to:
 - 1. Work for their meals.
 - 2. Use a separate lunchroom.
 - 3. Go through a separate serving line.
 - 4. Enter the lunchroom through a separate entrance.
 - 5. Eat meals at a different time.
 - 6. Eat a meal different from the one sold to children paying the full price.
- D. Agrees to set reduced price charges for lunch at or below the maximum reduced price allowed by regulations and below the full price of the lunch.
- E. Agrees that, in the operation of school nutrition programs, no child shall be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age or disability.
- F. Agrees to verify in accordance with program regulations and maintain records as follows: (1) a summary of the verification efforts; (2) the total number of applications on file by October 1st; and, (3) the percentage or number of applications verified. Compliance with these requirements will be monitored by the State agency as part of its supervisory assistance monitoring and verification efforts.

- G. Agrees to establish and use a fair hearing procedure under which: (1) a family can appeal a decision made by the School Food Authority with respect to the family's free and reduced price meal application; and, (2) the School Food Authority can challenge the continued eligibility of any child for free or reduced price meals. During the appeal and hearing, the child who was determined to be eligible based on the face of the application submitted will continue to receive free or reduced price meals. Prior to initiating the hearing procedure, the school official, the parent(s) or guardian may request a conference to provide an opportunity for the parent(s)/guardian and school officials to discuss the situation, present information, obtain an explanation of data submitted in the application and the decisions rendered. Such a conference shall not in any way prejudice nor diminish the right to a fair hearing.
- H. Agrees to designate the Supervisor of Nutrition Services to review applications and make determinations of eligibility. The Supervisor of Nutrition Services using the criteria outlined in this policy, will determine which individual children are eligible for free and reduced price meals.
- I. Agrees to develop and distribute to each child's parent(s) or guardian a letter. In addition, an application form for free and reduced price meals at or about the beginning of each school year or whenever there is a change in eligibility criteria. The letter to parents shall inform them of programs available and the free and reduced price meal application attachment which shall have the income eligibility guidelines for reduced price meals with an explanation that households with incomes at or below the reduced price guidelines may be eligible for either free or reduced price meals.

Interested parents or guardians are responsible for filling out the applications and returning it to the school for review. Such applications and documentation of determinations made will be maintained for a period of three years following the end of the school year to which they pertain.

Applications may be filed at any time during the year. Parents or guardians enrolling a child in a school for the first time shall be supplied with appropriate meal application materials regardless of the time of year the child is registered. If a child transfers from one school to another within the district, his/her eligibility for free or reduced price meals, will be transferred to and honored by the receiving school.

All children from an eligible household will receive the same benefits. Parents or guardians will be promptly notified of the acceptance or denial of their applications. Children will be served meals immediately upon the establishment of their eligibility.

The hearing procedure shall provide the following for both the family and the district:

1. A publicly announced simple method for making an oral or written request for a hearing.
2. An opportunity to be assisted or represented by an attorney or other person.
3. An opportunity to examine, prior to and during the hearing, the documents and records presented to support the decision under appeal.
4. Reasonable promptness and convenience in scheduling a hearing, and adequate notice as to its time and place.
5. An opportunity to present oral or documentary evidence and arguments supporting a position without undue interference.

6. An opportunity to question or refute any testimony or other evidence and to confront and cross-examine any adverse witness(es).
7. That the hearing be conducted and the decision be made by an official who did not participate in the decision under appeal or any previous conference.
8. That the decision of the hearing official be based on the oral and documentary evidence presented at the hearing and entered into the hearing record.
9. That the parties concerned and any designated representative thereof be notified in writing of the decision.
10. That for each hearing a written record be prepared, including the decision under appeal, any documentary evidence and a summary of any oral testimony presented at the hearing, the decision of the hearing official and the reasons therefore, and a copy of the notification to the parties concerned of the hearing official's decision.
11. That such written record must be retained for a period of three years after the close of the school year to which they pertain. These records must be made available for examination by the parties concerned, or their designees, at any reasonable time and place during such period.

The designated hearing official is the Director of Business Services.

It is recognized that in certain cases, foster children are also eligible for these benefits. If a household has foster children living with them and wishes to apply for such meals for these children, the household will be instructed to contact the school.

When an application is rejected, parents or guardians will be provided written notification which shall include: (1) the reason for the denial of benefits, e.g., income in excess of allowable limits or incomplete application; (2) notification of the right to appeal; (3) instructions on how to appeal; and, (4) a statement reminding parents that they may reapply for free and reduced price benefits at any time during the school year. The reasons for ineligibility shall be properly documented and retained on file at the School Food Authority level.

- J. Agrees to submit a public/press release containing both the free and reduced price eligibility guidelines and all other information outlined in the parent letter, to the local news media, local unemployment offices and major employers contemplating or experiencing large layoffs.
- K. Agrees to establish a procedure to collect money from children who pay for their meals and to account for the number of free, reduced price and full price meals served.
- L. Agrees to submit to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction any alterations, public announcements, etc., before implementation. Such changes will be effective only upon approval. All changes in eligibility criteria must be publicly announced in the same manner used at the beginning of the school year.

Policy Approved: August 21, 1985

**Policy Revised: January 31, 2002
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November 23, 2015