

**FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE MEALS**

SUBJECT TO STATE AND NATIONAL LAWS AND SUCH POLICIES, RULES AND REGULATIONS AS THE BOARD MAY ADOPT, FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE MEALS SHALL BE PROVIDED TO STUDENTS FROM HOUSEHOLDS WHO QUALIFY ECONOMICALLY.

AUTHORITY: F.S. 230.22 (1) (2)

POLICY ADOPTED: 5/8/69

POLICY READOPTED: 9/5/74;1/19/84

AMENDED POLICY APPROVED: 3/5/91

**RULES****1. RESPONSIBILITY FOR IDENTIFICATION**

It shall be the responsibility of each principal (designee) to identify those students eligible to receive free and reduced-price meals. This identification shall be made within a period of ten days following the receipt of a properly completed application, in accordance with established criteria and must apply to free or reduced-price lunches, and where available, free or reduced-price breakfast.

**2. STANDARDS OF ELIGIBILITY**

- a. The Florida Income Guidelines for free and reduced-price meals shall be made available to each principal annually by the School Food Service Department. The Income Guidelines shall be adjusted to conform with State Department of Education approved guidelines.
- b. The specific criteria to be used in identifying those students eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals shall be:
  - (1) Total household income, including welfare grants
  - (2) The number of individuals in the household

**3. PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT**

- a. At the beginning of each school year, a public announcement shall be made concerning free and reduced-price meals. This announcement shall be made by means of the mass media and shall include a statement setting forth eligibility criteria and how application may be made.
- b. Any subsequent changes in eligibility standards or procedures during the school year shall be publicly announced in the same manner as the original standards.
- c. At the beginning of each school year, each principal shall send a letter to all the parents and guardians of students in his/her school. This letter shall include:
  - (1) A statement as to the purpose of free and reduced-price meals.
  - (2) The criteria which establish eligibility for free and reduced-price meals.
  - (3) An explanation as to how a family may make application.
  - (4) An application form.
  - (5) The manner in which a family may appeal a decision.
- d. In certain cases, foster children are eligible for these benefits. Application forms shall include a place to check such a request.
- e. Students enrolling in a school after the beginning of the school year shall also be provided with a copy of this letter, and an application.

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- a. Any family wishing to make application for free or reduced-price meals may do so by completing the application they have received, and submitting it to the principal of the school for his/her determination. This application must be signed by an adult member of the family and shall be accepted at any time during the school year.
- b. Social security numbers must be provided for the adult head of the household or the adult signing the application before the application can be processed numbers is required by Section 9 of the National School Lunch Act. The social security numbers may be used to verify information on the application.
- c. If a household is approved for meal benefits, they must report any changes in household size and increases in income of more than \$50.00 per month or \$600.00 per year.
- d. When the information furnished by a family in its application indicates that the family meets the eligibility standards for free or reduced-price meals, the children from such a family shall be provided with free meals or reduced-price meals. The principal may require verification of income prior to approval or at any time during the school year.
- e. The family involved shall receive notification of the action taken on its application for free or reduced-price meals.
- f. If a child transfers from one school to another in Broward County, his/her eligibility for free or reduced-price meals shall be transferred to and honored by the receiving school for ten days while a new application is being submitted.

**5. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE FOR NONDISCRIMINATION**

- a. Each school shall take every measure feasible to eliminate the possibility of any other student knowing who receives free or reduced-price meals. Names of students receiving free or reduced-price meals shall not be published, posted, or announced in any way. Students eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals must:
  - (1) Use the same dining room as those who pay.
  - (2) Enter the dining room through the same entrance and serving lines as those who pay.
  - (3) Eat at the same time as those who pay.
  - (4) Use the same type roster or card as those who pay.
  - (5) Be served the same meal as those who pay.
  - (6) Receive their meal without having to work for it.

**6. APPEAL PROVISION**

- a. If a family is not satisfied with the decision made with respect to their application for free or reduced-price meals, they may request a hearing to appeal the decision. This request may be made orally or in writing to:

The Superintendent  
The School Board of Broward County, Florida  
600 Southeast Third Avenue  
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301
- b. Listed below are the provisions for the hearing procedure:
  - (1) The family may be accompanied by the attorney or some other person to assist or represent them in their appeal;

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- (2) The documents and records to be presented in support of the decision under appeal must be made available to the family or their representative for examination prior to and during the hearing;
  - (3) Adequate notice shall be given to the family as to the time and place of the hearing
  - (4) The hearing shall be held with reasonable promptness and at a time and place convenient to the family and Superintendent or his/her designated representative;
  - (5) The family shall be provided with an opportunity to present oral or documentary evidence and arguments supporting its position without undue interference;
  - (6) The family may question or refuse any testimony or evidence and confront and cross-examine any adverse witnesses;
  - (7) The hearing shall be conducted and the decision shall be made by the Superintendent or his/her designated representative;
  - (8) The decision of the Superintendent or his/her designated representative shall be based on the oral and documentary evidence presented at the hearing and shall be made a part of the hearing record;
  - (9) The family and its designated representative, if any, shall be notified in writing of the decision of the Superintendent or his/her designated representative;
  - (10) A written record shall be prepared with respect to each hearing. The record shall include the decision under appeal, any documentary evidence and a summary of any oral testimony presented at the hearing, the decision of the Superintendent, including the reasons therefor, and a copy of the notification to the family of the decision of the hearing official; and
  - (11) The written record of each hearing shall be preserved for a period of three (3) years and shall be available for examination by the family or its representative at any reasonable time and place during that period.
- c. This same hearing procedure shall be followed when a principal challenges the continued eligibility of any child for free or reduced-price meals.
4. During the pendency of such challenge, the child shall continue to receive the free or reduced-price meal to which he/she was originally determined to be eligible.

**7. VERIFICATION OF INCOME**

- a. The School Board will verify the income information on three per cent of all approved free and reduced meal applications on file by October 31st of the school year and names the Director of Food Service as their verification official. Applications will be randomly selected district-wide, and the verification process will be completed within five months of the beginning of school.
- b. The household will be given ten (10) days to supply requested documentation. If no income information is supplied, or if the documentation does not support the benefits for which the household has been approved, the District will reduce or terminate benefits as appropriate. Households will be given ten (10) days' advance notice of change in benefits as a result of verification.
- c. Households may appeal a decision made by the School Board. If the household appeals the decision during the ten (10) day advance notice period, the Board will continue to provide benefits throughout the appeal and decision process.
- d. The Director of Food Service will serve as the appeal hearing official. The same hearing procedure for free and reduced-price applications will serve for verification appeals.
- e. Records will be maintained on how applications were selected for verification, how each was verified, the dates notices were sent, notes on contacts made, the results, the reason for any changes in eligibility, and signature of the official.

**FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE MEALS****8. COLLECTING PAYMENTS**

a. In order to insure the anonymity of students receiving free or reduced-price meals, the following money-collecting procedures shall be used:

- (1) Daily Cash Sales
  - (a) Cash register tapes
  - (b) Adding machine tapes
  - (c) Cafeteria daily unit sales control
- (2) Advance Sales
  - (a) Roster
  - (b) Identification cards

See Meal Count System Procedure.

**9. CIVIL RIGHT REQUIREMENTS**

a. In all forms of communication and printed program information that are disseminated such as free and reduced-price notification letters, application forms, and public releases, the following will be included:

- (1) The statement that program benefits and services are available to all children without regard to race, color, sex, handicap, age, or national origin, and
- (2) The procedure for filing a complaint.

b. The nondiscrimination poster developed by the United States Department of Agriculture and provided by the Florida Department of Education will be displayed in a prominent place.

AUTHORITY F.S. 230.22 (1)(2)

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