



## Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Program Parent Handout 2023-2024

At the beginning of each school year, a copy of this handout will be provided to every parent/guardian. In addition, a copy of this procedure, along with information about free and reduced-price school meals, will be provided to the parents/guardians of all students who enroll after the beginning of the school year.

A copy of this handout will also be provided to all building administrators, staff responsible for collecting payment for meals at the point of service, staff involved with notifying parents/guardians about account balances, school social workers, nurses, counselors, the district liaison for homeless children and youths, and any other staff who regularly assist students in need.

This handout will also be posted on the district's website.

### Free and Reduced Meals

We ask **ALL families** to complete the **Free and Reduced Lunch Application** by **August 1st**.

- Complete the **free-reduced meal application** to determine your eligibility.
  - If a family is not eligible for free or reduced meals, they will be considered full-pay and must pay for meals.

### Meal Prices

For the 2023-2024 school year, the prices for breakfast and lunch are as follows:

- Full price breakfast - \$2.50 | Full price lunch \$3.50
- Reduced breakfast - \$0.40 | Reduced lunch \$0.40

### Daily Meal Service

Breakfast and lunch are catered daily from our vendor Two Mikes and are available to students daily. Breakfast includes milk, fruit, juice, cereal, and/or another breakfast entrée. Lunches include milk or juice, a main entrée, fruit, and vegetables. Menus are published monthly.

### Ordering Meals

**Paid families** must pre-order meals at least one week in advance, by Sunday at 11:00 pm. For example, meals for the week of August 14 must be ordered by 11:00 pm on Sunday, August 6. Similarly, meals for the week of August 21 must be ordered by 11:00 pm on Sunday, August 13. For parents who **do not** order breakfast and/or lunch, their learner(s) will be served a healthy alternative. For **free and reduced families**, your meals will be pre-ordered by food service staff.

### Meal Accounts

Our goal is to maintain consistent meal account procedures. Unpaid charges place a financial strain on the school's finances. The food service department is responsible for maintaining food charge records and for notifying families and the accounting department of outstanding balances.

### Communication

To ensure that parents/guardians have ample opportunity to resolve situations involving unpaid meal charges, we will:



1. Provide timely notification to parents/guardians when account balances run low and/or become negative. Notices will be sent via EZ School Apps, e-mail, School Messenger, and phone calls from the FNS staff.
2. Work with parents/guardians to create a payment plan that allows for the payment of accumulated charges over time.
3. If financial hardship is suspected, families will be encouraged to apply for the free/reduced-price meals at any time during the school year.

### **Records**

The district will maintain detailed records of all accounts including details regarding delinquent accounts, including evidence of efforts to collect unpaid meal charges.

### **Cafeteria Expectations**

All students are required to eat lunch in the cafeteria, whether they bring their lunch or buy their lunch unless a teacher has made other arrangements. The lunch period should be used not only as a period to satisfy one of our basic physical needs, but also as a time to develop desirable cultural habits. Therefore, students are expected to be orderly in line, sit at their assigned tables as soon as served, use good table manners, talk quietly while eating, and leave the lunchroom when excused. Students are expected to clear their trash from the tables.

For the health and safety of the students, food cannot be shared.

### Cafeteria Rules:

- Use a Level 2 voice
- KHFOOTY (Keep Hands, Feet, and Other Objects to Yourself)
- Face forward, have your bottom on the seat, and your feet on the floor
- Raise your hand & ask permission to leave your seat.

### **Nondiscrimination Statement**

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs (including the district), are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by the USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the agency (state or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact the USDA through the Federal Relay Service at 800-877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (AD-3027) found online at [https://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](https://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to the USDA and provide in the letter all the information requested in the form.

To request a copy of the complaint form, call 866-632-9992.



Submit your completed form or letter to the USDA by:

1. Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250-9410
2. Fax: 202-690-7442
3. E-mail: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

**LETTER TO PARENTS**  
**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS**

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. **The Biome School** offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs **\$2.50**; lunch costs **\$3.50**. **Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals.** Reduced price is **\$0.40** for breakfast and **\$0.40** for lunch. This packet includes an application for free or reduced price meal benefits, and a set of detailed instructions. Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

1. WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS?

- All children in households receiving benefits from **the Food Stamp Program/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) or Temporary Assistance/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)**, are eligible for free meals.
- **Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.**
- **Children participating in their school's Head Start program are eligible for free meals.**
- Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals.
- Children may receive free or reduced price meals if your household's income is within the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Your children may qualify for free or reduced price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

<b>Household Size</b>	<b>Annually</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Weekly</b>
1	\$26,973	\$2,248	\$519
2	36,482	3,041	702
3	45,991	3,833	885
4	55,500	4,625	1,068
5	65,009	5,418	1,251
6	74,518	6,210	1,434
7	84,027	7,003	1,616
8	93,536	7,795	1,799
For each add'l person add	+9,509	+793	+183

2. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILDREN QUALIFY AS HOMELESS, MIGRANT, OR RUNAWAY? Do the members of your household lack a permanent address? Are you staying together in a shelter, hotel, or other temporary housing arrangement? Does your family relocate on a seasonal basis? Are any children living with you who have chosen to leave their prior family or household? If you believe children in your household meet these descriptions and haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call or e-mail **Kristan Kent** [kkent@thebiomeschool.org](mailto:kkent@thebiomeschool.org).

3. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD? No. *Use one Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application for all students in your household.* We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information. Return the completed application to: **Kristan Kent**, [kkent@thebiomeschool.org](mailto:kkent@thebiomeschool.org).

4. SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE ALREADY APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS? No, but please read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact immediately **Kristan Kent**, [kkent@thebiomeschool.org](mailto:kkent@thebiomeschool.org).

5. MY CHILD'S APPLICATION WAS APPROVED LAST YEAR. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT A NEW ONE? Yes. Your child's application is only good for that school year and for the first few days of this school year. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year.

6. I GET WIC. CAN MY CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS? Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please send in an application.

7. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.

8. IF I DON'T QUALIFY NOW, MAY I APPLY LATER? Yes, you may apply at any time during the school year. For example, children with a parent or guardian who becomes unemployed may become eligible for free and reduced price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.

9. WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE SCHOOL'S DECISION ABOUT MY APPLICATION? You should talk to school officials. You also may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to: **Kristan Kent, [kkent@thebiomeschool.org](mailto:kkent@thebiomeschool.org)**.

10. MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN? Yes. You, your children, or other household members do not have to be U.S. citizens to apply for free or reduced price meals.

11. WHAT IF MY INCOME IS NOT ALWAYS THE SAME? List the amount that you normally receive. For example, if you normally make \$1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only made \$900, put down that you made \$1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but do not include it if you only work overtime sometimes. If you have lost a job or had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income.

12. WHAT IF SOME HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS HAVE NO INCOME TO REPORT? Household members may not receive some types of income we ask you to report on the application, or may not receive income at all. Whenever this happens, please write a 0 in the field. However, if any income fields are left empty or blank, those will also be counted as zeroes. Please be careful when leaving income fields blank, as we will assume you meant to do so.

13. WE ARE IN THE MILITARY. DO WE REPORT OUR INCOME DIFFERENTLY? Your basic pay and cash bonuses must be reported as income. If you get any cash value allowances for off-base housing, food, or clothing, or receive Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance payments, it must also be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income. Any additional combat pay resulting from deployment is also excluded from income.

14. WHAT IF THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SPACE ON THE APPLICATION FOR MY FAMILY? List any additional household members on a separate piece of paper, and attach it to your application. Contact **Kristan Kent, [kkent@thebiomeschool.org](mailto:kkent@thebiomeschool.org)** to receive a second application.

15. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for the Food Stamp Program/SNAP or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call 1-855-373-4636.

16. CAN I APPLY ONLINE? Yes! You are encouraged to complete an online application instead of a paper application if you are able. The online application has the same requirements and will ask you for the same information as the paper application. Visit **<https://thebiomeschool.org/current-families/menus/>** to begin or to learn more about the online application process. Contact **Kristan Kent, [kkent@thebiomeschool.org](mailto:kkent@thebiomeschool.org)** if you have any questions about the online application.

If you have other questions or need help, call **314-531-9916**.

Sincerely,

**Kristan Kent**  
**Food Services Manager**

USDA Non-discrimination Statement:

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **mail:**  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**  
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**  
[Program.Intake@usda.gov](mailto:Program.Intake@usda.gov)

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