

State announces annual free, reduced price meal policy

The Delaware Department of Education announces the U.S. Department of Agriculture policy for free and reduced price meals for children unable to pay the full price for meals served under the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and After School Snack Program. Each participating school and its administrative office has a copy of the policy, which may be reviewed by any interested party.

Meal benefit forms will be sent home with a letter to families. To apply for free or reduced price meals, households should fill out the form and return it to the school. The information provided on the form will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and may be verified at any time during the school year by program officials. Information on the form may not be used for any other purpose unless consent is granted by parent/guardian.

For program officials to determine eligibility, households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and/or Delaware Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (DE-TANF) must list the child's name, SNAP and/or DE-TANF case number, and provide a signature and name of an adult household member. Households not receiving SNAP and/or DE-TANF must list: names of all household members; the amount of the gross income for each household member received last month; the income source and how often received; the signature of an adult household member; and that adult's last four digits of Social Security Number, or the word "none" or "No Social Security Number" box marked if the adult does not have a number. The form may be submitted at any time during the school year.

Under the provisions of the free and reduced price policy, the school nutrition services supervisor will review the form and determine eligibility.

Parents or guardians dissatisfied with the ruling of the official may discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. Parents or guardians wishing to make a formal appeal may make a request either orally or in writing to the administrative office for a hearing on the decision.

Children who are enrolled in Head Start or are homeless, migrant, runaway or in foster care are eligible for free school meal benefits. In certain instances, children receiving WIC also may be eligible. Parents or guardians wishing to apply should follow the instructions on the form or contact the child's school for more information.

Households may report changes or reapply for meal benefits anytime during the school year. The information provided by the household is confidential and will be used only for purposes of determining eligibility and verifying data.

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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 USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

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(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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