

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FREE OR REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Port Townsend School District offers a healthy breakfast and lunch every school day.

Meal prices are:

<u>GRADES K-5</u>		<u>GRADES 6-12</u>	
Full priced breakfast:	\$2.00	Full priced breakfast:	\$2.25
Reduced priced breakfast:	FREE	Reduced priced breakfast:	FREE
Full priced lunch:	\$3.25	Full priced lunch:	\$3.50
Reduced priced lunch:	\$0.40	Reduced priced lunch:	\$0.40

Regardless of your Fee or Reduced status, *milk only* purchases will be charged at \$.50.

***We are encouraging every family to fill out a form, even if you don't think you will qualify. Many community and school programs rely on our Free/Reduced lunch numbers so please complete the attached application. ***

Students in all grades are encouraged to pre-purchase meals using check, cash in the school office or **on-line** using e-funds. Our school district uses Skyward to track deposits and meals purchased. You can check your child's Food Service account on Family Access.

Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals-federal guidelines change each year. This packet includes an application for free or reduced price meal benefits, a set of detailed instructions, and the consent to share program eligibility information for other school programs such as ASB. Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

- 1. 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 Family Access account at www.ptschools.org to begin. If you do not have a Family Access account or have questions regarding it, please contact LaTrecia Arthur in the Superintendent's Office, 379-4501.
- 2. 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 your children's School Office.
- 3. 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 30 days of this school year. **If you qualified last year for free or reduced-price, the benefits will expire at the end of the school day on October 18, 2022.**
- 4. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED?** Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.
- 5. 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.
- 6. 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.
- 7. 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 occasionally. If you have lost a job or had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income.

8. WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS?

- All children in households receiving benefits from Basic Food (Washington State's food stamp program), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) are eligible for free meals. **You must put their case number on the application.**
- Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court 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.

USDA Child Nutrition Program Income Guidelines Effective July 1, 2022–June 30, 2023					
Household Size	Annual	Monthly	Twice Per Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	\$25,142	\$2,096	\$1,048	\$967	\$484
2	\$33,874	\$2,823	\$1,412	\$1,303	\$652
3	\$42,606	\$3,551	\$1,776	\$1,639	\$820
4	\$51,338	\$4,279	\$2,140	\$1,975	\$988
5	\$60,070	\$5,006	\$2,503	\$2,311	\$1,156
6	\$68,802	\$5,734	\$2,867	\$2,647	\$1,324
7	\$77,534	\$6,462	\$3,231	\$2,983	\$1,492
8	\$86,266	\$7,189	\$3,595	\$3,318	\$1,659
For each add'l family member, add:	\$8,732	\$728	\$364	\$336	\$168

- 9. 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 Darrell Thomas, Port Townsend School's Homeless Liaison, 379-4548, dthomas@ptschools.org.
- 10. 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 a completed application to make sure.
- 11. 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: Port Townsend School District office, 1610 Blaine Street, Port Townsend WA 98368, 379-4501.
- 12. WHAT IF SOME HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS HAVE NO INCOME TO REPORT?** On the application some types of income are not listed or some household members 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. 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 your school or Shannon Minnihan, Director of Food Service, 379-4281, sminnihan@ptschools.org to receive a second application.
- 14. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR?** To find out how to apply for Basic Food or other assistance benefits, contact your local DSHS Community Service Office or call 1-877-501-2233, or by logging on to http://www.foodhelp.wa.gov/basic_food.htm.

If you have other questions or need help, call Danielle Ferrero 379-4604 or myself at 379-4281. Thank you

Shannon Minnihan
Director of Food Service