

Free and Reduced Price Meals

The Arnold Public Schools has agreed to participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and accepts responsibility for providing free and reduced price meals to eligible children in the schools under its jurisdiction. The school food authority assures the State Department of Education that the school system will uniformly implement the following policy to determine children's eligibility for free and reduced price meals in all National School Lunch Programs. In fulfilling its responsibilities the school food authority:

- A) Agrees to serve meals free to children from families whose income is at or below that established by the NSLP for free meals.
- B) Agrees to serve meals at a reduced price to children from families whose income is at or below that established by the NSLP for reduced meals listed.
- C) Agrees to provide these benefits to any child whose family income falls within the criteria established by the NSLP for free or reduced meals after deductions are made for the following special hardship conditions which could not reasonably be anticipated or controlled by the household:
 - 1. Unusually high medical expenses
 - 2. Shelter costs in excess of 30 percent of reported income
 - 3. Special education expenses due to the mental or physical condition of a child
 - 4. Disaster or casualty losses

In addition, agrees to provide these benefits to children from families who are experiencing strikes, layoffs and unemployment which cause the family income to fall within the criteria established by the NSLP for free or reduced meals.

- D) Agrees there will be no physical segregation of, nor any other discrimination against, any child because of his inability to pay the full price of the meal. The names of the children eligible to receive free and reduced price meals shall not be published, posted or announced in any manner and there shall be no overt identification of any such children by use of special tokens or tickets or any other means.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 lunch room
 - 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
- E) Agrees in the operation of child nutrition programs, no child shall be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, or national origin.
- F) Agrees to establish and use a fair hearing procedure for parental appeals of the school's decisions on applications and for school officials' challenges to the correctness of information contained in an application or continued eligibility of any child for free or reduced price meals. During the appeal and hearing the child will continue to receive free or reduced priced meals. A record of all such appeals and challenges and their dispositions shall be retained for three (3) years. Prior to initiating the hearing procedures, the parent or local school official may request a conference to provide an opportunity for the parent and school official to discuss the situation, present information,

and obtain an explanation of data submitted in the application and decisions rendered. Such a conference shall not in any way prejudice or diminish the right to a fair hearing. The hearing procedure shall provide the following:

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 the time and place of the hearing
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 witnesses
7. The hearing be conducted and the decision made by a hearing official who did not participate in the decision under appeal or in any previous conference
8. The parties concerned and any designated representative thereof be notified in writing of the decision of the hearing official

G) Agrees to designate the Superintendent or designee to review applications and make determinations of eligibility. This official will use the criteria outlined in this policy to determine which individual children are eligible for free or reduced price meals.

H) Agrees to develop and send to each child's parent or guardian a letter as outlined by State Department of Education including an application form for free or reduced price meals at the beginning of each school year. Applications may be filed at any time during the year. All children from a family will receive the same benefits.

I) The following information will be available in the office of the Superintendent.

1. Eligibility criteria for free and reduced meals
2. Parent letter and application
3. Public release
4. Collection procedure

Legal Reference: National School Lunch Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1751 et. seq.
Child Nutrition Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1771 et. seq.

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