

# Free/Reduced-price Meal Application

## Questions and Answers for South Middleton School District



### Questions and Answers

**1. Who can get free or reduced-price meals?**

Children in households getting Food Stamps (SNAP) or TANF and most foster children can receive free meals regardless of your income. Also, if your household income is within the limits on the Federal Income Chart, your children can receive free or reduced-price meals.

**2. Will the information about my income or benefits I identify be checked?**

Yes, we may ask you to send written proof of the information you provide.

**3. What if I stop getting Food Stamps (SNAP) or TANF?**

If your children qualify because you listed a Food Stamp (SNAP) or TANF case number, you must tell the District when you no longer receive Food Stamps (SNAP) or TANF.

**4. What if my household size or income changes?**

If your children qualify for free or reduced-price meals based on your income, you must tell the District if your household size goes down or if your income goes up by more than \$50 per month (\$600 per year). You do not have to fill out another application.

**5. If I don't qualify now, may I apply again later?**

Yes. You may apply at any time during the school year if your household size goes up, income goes down, or if you start getting Food Stamps (SNAP) or TANF. If you lose your job, your children may be able to receive free or reduced-price meals during the time you are unemployed.

**6. 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: Mr. James Estep, Superintendent, District Administration Office, 4 Academy Street, Suite 100, Boiling Springs, PA 17007 or (717) 258-6484, ext. 2311.

**7. Do I have to fill out an application?**

No, you only need to complete an application if you want to apply for free or reduced-price meals for your children. We strongly urge you to do so, if there is any possibility your family may qualify.

**8. Should I fill out an application if I received a letter this school year saying my children have been approved (Directly Certified) for free or reduced-price meals?**

Please read the letter you received carefully and follow the instructions. Call the District at (717) 258-6484, ext. 2303, if you still have questions.

**9. Who can I apply for?**

You may apply for *any* child in your household who attends a school serving meals through the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program. All the students in your household may be included on one application.

**10. May I apply if someone in my household is not a U.S. citizen?**

Yes. You do not have to be a U.S. citizen to qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

**11. Will my children be treated differently because they receive free or reduced-price meals?**

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No. Your children will not be identified or treated differently from children who pay the full price for meals. The computerized meal system maintains account information privately and confidentially. There are no separate free and reduced-price meal lines or any other way to visibly identify participants in the free and reduced-price meal program.

### **12. What if some of my children get Food Stamps (SNAP) or TANF and others don't?**

On the application, fill out Part 1, listing Food Stamp or TANF case numbers for those children who get them. Fill out Part 3, giving the names of all household members and the income each received last month. Under "Income" include the TANF payments your household gets, but not the value of the Food Stamps. Sign the application and give your Social Security Number.

### **13. If I no longer receive Food Stamps (SNAP) or TANF, can I list my old case number?**

No. Only a current nine-digit Food Stamp (SNAP) or TANF case number can be used on this application

### **14. May I use my EBT number to get free meals?**

No. You must use your current nine-digit Food Stamp (SNAP) or TANF case number. Contact your caseworker if you do not know your number.

### **15. Who should I include as members of my household?**

You must include *all* people living in your household, *related or not* (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends). You must include yourself and all children.

### **16. What if my income last month was more or less than normal?**

List the amount that you usually receive. For example, if you usually receive \$1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only received \$900, put down that you get \$1000 per month. If you usually receive overtime, include it.

### **17. Who do I contact at the school district if I have questions about applying?**

You can contact Jennifer Metz in the District Office with questions about applications or Direct Certification Notifications at (717) 258-6484, ext. 2303 or [jfm@smsd.us](mailto:jfm@smsd.us).

### **18. Where do I get an application? Am I able to apply prior to the beginning of the school year (over the summer)?**

Paper applications will be available for download from the school district website at [www.smsd.us](http://www.smsd.us) under *Departments -> Food Services -> Free and Reduced-price Meal Applications*. You can also apply online at [www.schoolcafe.com](http://www.schoolcafe.com) or [www.compass.state.pa.us](http://www.compass.state.pa.us)

Yes, you are able apply during the summer *but after July 1<sup>st</sup>*. Applications must be completed on the current school year form.

### **19. If I do not have access to the internet or to a printer, what do I do?**

Please contact Jennifer Metz at the District Office for assistance in obtaining a paper copy of the application at (717) 258-6484, ext. 2303

### **20. How quickly will my application be processed at the school district?**

Once an application is received at the District Office, it usually takes 1-3 business days to process it. If the application is missing information, it will take longer to process. Please make sure you complete all of the requested information on the application prior to submitting it.

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### **21. How will I be notified if my students are eligible for free or reduced-price meals?**

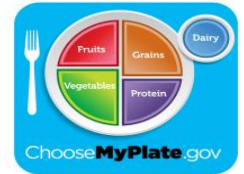
If you submit an application, you will receive a letter of Approval or Denial of Benefits identifying what the students in your household are eligible for. If a student (or students) in your household is (are) Directly Certified and eligible for free meals, the letter will be sent to the person who applied for the benefit. Occasionally, students who are Directly Certified receive the benefit from someone who does not reside in the household. Due to confidentiality purposes, the school district must send the letter of Direct Certification to the person who applied for the benefit. They are asked to share this information with all households who need to know.

### **22. Do I need to apply separately for free/reduced-price breakfast and lunch?**

No, you do not need to complete separate applications for breakfast and lunch. *One application should be completed for all the students in your household for both meal options.*

### **23. What is included with a free/reduced-price meal?**

Students will be provided a “reimbursable meal” under the free/reduced-price meal program (this varies somewhat for breakfast and for lunch). This is the exact same meal that is provided to all students at mealtime. If a student wishes to purchase additional food items beyond the reimbursable meal, such as seconds, desserts, snacks or additional beverages, they will need to pay with cash or have funds in their meal accounts. Those items are NOT part of the free/reduced-price meal program.



### **24. If a student is eligible for free/reduced-price meals, do they need money in their meal accounts? How do I put money in my students' accounts?**

If a student wishes to purchase food items that do not qualify as a “reimbursable meal” (see question #23), they will need money in their meal account to purchase additional items.



Once your students are enrolled in South Middleton School District, you may set up a meal account through School Café at [www.schoolcafe.com](http://www.schoolcafe.com). You can also download the free SchoolCafe app to your mobile device. Payments may be made online through this site or via the app and can be set up for automatic replenishment. You can also send in payments to your student’s school to be added to their accounts throughout the school year.

### **25. What does it mean for a student to be “Directly Certified” or “Direct Approval”?**

Students enrolled in South Middleton School District are matched in the Pennsylvania Assistance systems based on benefits the student or someone in the household receives (SNAP, TANF, Medial Assistance, etc.). The District receives a list of students who have been matched in the system to receive free meals. These students are identified as “Directly Certified”/“Direct Approval” and a Free/Reduced-price Meal application does not need to be completed.

### **26. How do I find out what daily menu items are being served for breakfast and lunch?**

Breakfast and Lunch menus for each school will be available via the school district site ([www.smsd.us](http://www.smsd.us)) under “food services” and via the Nutrislice site/app. You can also download the free Nutrislice app to your mobile device. Nutrislice provides information about daily menu items available and related nutritional information (which can be helpful for students with special dietary needs).

