

**LAFAYETTE PARISH SCHOOL SYSTEM  
CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS  
MEAL BENEFITS**

The following information is provided to clarify the guidelines for meal benefits, which is mandated by state and federal regulations for all school districts participating in the school breakfast and lunch program. Current information dealing with meal benefits can be found on the LPSS website at [www.lpssonline.com/child nutrition/meal benefits application](http://www.lpssonline.com/child%20nutrition/meal%20benefits%20application).

1. How do I apply for meal benefits?

- *Complete an application online at <https://www.applyforlunch.com/Application>*
- *Complete a paper application at the school site or Child Nutrition Services office*

2. Who is eligible for meal benefits?

*All children in households receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Food Distribution Program on an Indian Reservation, or families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), can get free meal benefits regardless of their income. Also, children living in a household that has a gross income within the specified range for the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines are eligible to receive meal benefits.*

3. When can I complete an application?

*Applications are sent home with each student at every school site at the beginning of every school year. Applications are available through the following:*

- *Online at <https://www.applyforlunch.com/Application>*
- *Cafeteria Manager at school site*
- *Child Nutrition Services office*

4. If I have no income, can I apply for meal benefits?

*Yes. However, the meal benefit status will only be available for 30 calendar days. A letter stating the expiration date of the meal status will be mailed to the household along with instructions on how to proceed.*

5. Do I need to complete an application for each child in my family?

*No. Only one application should be completed for each household even though there may be multiple students attending different campuses. Multiple applications may delay the processing of a family's application.*

6. Do I have to complete a new application each school year?

*Yes. A new application is needed at the beginning of each school year unless you have received a letter stating that you have automatically been approved for meal benefits. Meal benefits from the previous school year only apply for the first 30 operating school days.*

7. How long will it take for my application to be processed?

*State and federal guidelines allow up to 10 operating days from the time the application is received in the Child Nutrition Services office and eligibility is determined.*

8. Will the eligibility of a meal benefits application be determined quicker with an online application?

*Yes. The online application is electronically delivered to the Child Nutrition Services office within 30 minutes of submission, and processed in the order it is received.*

9. Should an application be completed even if I receive a letter stating my children have been approved for free meals?

*No. Do not complete an application if you receive a letter stating your children have been approved for free meals. Only the students listed on the letter will receive free meals. If you have a child that is NOT listed on the letter, an application will have to be completed for ONLY that child.*

10. Can the information from my application be checked?

*Yes. The information from an application can be checked if it is selected for verification. Verification is a process where random applications are selected by the computer, and these selected applications will have to provide the necessary documentation to support the information that is recorded on the application. Failure to do so will result in losing current meal benefits.*

11. If I do not qualify now, can I reapply at a later date?

*Yes. If the household's income status changes (change of wages, unemployment) after the processing of the initial application, another application may be completed. Current check stubs and/or exit letter from former employer will be required when completing the application.*

12. Who should I include as members of my household?

*All individuals living in the home, related or not, who share income and expenses must be included on the application. You must include yourself and all children living in the home. If other individuals live in the household who are economically independent do not include them or their income.*

13. Will I be notified of my eligibility decision?

*Yes. A letter will be mailed to each household that completed an application with the determined eligibility (free, reduced, and denied). If the letter is returned to our office for any reason, the letter will be sent home with one of the students on the application.*

14. Do I need to keep my eligibility letter? Why?

*Yes. Other programs do require a student's eligibility letter to be a participant in their program (4-H Camp, Aftercare, ACT Testing, etc.). If you are asked to provide your eligibility letter, please give a copy and not an original. Eligibility letters CANNOT be reprinted.*

15. If I am transferring from another parish with meal benefits, do I need to complete another application?

*Yes. Meal benefits can transfer from another parish, but is only valid for a temporary time period of 10 school days. To transfer a meal benefits status, a copy of the prior parish's meal benefits application must be submitted to the LPSS Child Nutrition Services office. During the 10 day temporary time period, a LPSS meal benefits application must be submitted to continue with meal benefits. Meal benefits do transfer from school to school within the LPSS school district.*

16. What causes an automatic denial of a meal benefits application?

*If an application is not completed according to the provided instructions for each specific household, the application will be automatically denied.*

**LAFAYETTE PARISH SCHOOL SYSTEM  
CHILD NUTRITION SERVICES**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS  
MEAL BENEFITS**

The following information is provided to clarify the guidelines for meal benefits, which is mandated by state and federal regulations for all school districts participating in the school breakfast and lunch program. Current information dealing with meal benefits can be found on the LPSS website at [www.lpssonline.com/child nutrition/meal benefits application](http://www.lpssonline.com/child%20nutrition/meal%20benefits%20application).

1. How do I apply for meal benefits?

- *Complete an application online at <https://www.applyforlunch.com/Application>*
- *Complete a paper application at the school site or Child Nutrition Services office*

2. Who is eligible for meal benefits?

*All children in households receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Food Distribution Program on an Indian Reservation, or families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), can get free meal benefits regardless of their income. Also, children living in a household that has a gross income within the specified range for the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines are eligible to receive meal benefits.*

3. When can I complete an application?

*Applications are sent home with each student at every school site at the beginning of every school year. Applications are available through the following:*

- *Online at <https://www.applyforlunch.com/Application>*
- *Cafeteria Manager at school site*
- *Child Nutrition Services office*

4. If I have no income, can I apply for meal benefits?

*Yes. However, the meal benefit status will only be available for 30 calendar days. A letter stating the expiration date of the meal status will be mailed to the household along with instructions on how to proceed.*

5. Do I need to complete an application for each child in my family?

*No. Only one application should be completed for each household even though there may be multiple students attending different campuses. Multiple applications may delay the processing of a family's application.*

6. Do I have to complete a new application each school year?

*Yes. A new application is needed at the beginning of each school year unless you have received a letter stating that you have automatically been approved for meal benefits. Meal benefits from the previous school year only apply for the first 30 operating school days.*

7. How long will it take for my application to be processed?

*State and federal guidelines allow up to 10 operating days from the time the application is received in the Child Nutrition Services office and eligibility is determined.*

8. Will the eligibility of a meal benefits application be determined quicker with an online application?

*Yes. The online application is electronically delivered to the Child Nutrition Services office within 30 minutes of submission, and processed in the order it is received.*

9. Should an application be completed even if I receive a letter stating my children have been approved for free meals?

*No. Do not complete an application if you receive a letter stating your children have been approved for free meals. Only the students listed on the letter will receive free meals. If you have a child that is NOT listed on the letter, an application will have to be completed for ONLY that child.*

10. Can the information from my application be checked?

*Yes. The information from an application can be checked if it is selected for verification. Verification is a process where random applications are selected by the computer, and these selected applications will have to provide the necessary documentation to support the information that is recorded on the application. Failure to do so will result in losing current meal benefits.*

11. If I do not qualify now, can I reapply at a later date?

*Yes. If the household's income status changes (change of wages, unemployment) after the processing of the initial application, another application may be completed. Current check stubs and/or exit letter from former employer will be required when completing the application.*

12. Who should I include as members of my household?

*All individuals living in the home, related or not, who share income and expenses must be included on the application. You must include yourself and all children living in the home. If other individuals live in the household who are economically independent do not include them or their income.*

13. Will I be notified of my eligibility decision?

*Yes. A letter will be mailed to each household that completed an application with the determined eligibility (free, reduced, and denied). If the letter is returned to our office for any reason, the letter will be sent home with one of the students on the application.*

14. Do I need to keep my eligibility letter? Why?

*Yes. Other programs do require a student's eligibility letter to be a participant in their program (4-H Camp, Aftercare, ACT Testing, etc.). If you are asked to provide your eligibility letter, please give a copy and not an original. Eligibility letters CANNOT be reprinted.*

15. If I am transferring from another parish with meal benefits, do I need to complete another application?

*Yes. Meal benefits can transfer from another parish, but is only valid for a temporary time period of 10 school days. To transfer a meal benefits status, a copy of the prior parish's meal benefits application must be submitted to the LPSS Child Nutrition Services office. During the 10 day temporary time period, a LPSS meal benefits application must be submitted to continue with meal benefits. Meal benefits do transfer from school to school within the LPSS school district.*

16. What causes an automatic denial of a meal benefits application?

*If an application is not completed according to the provided instructions for each specific household, the application will be automatically denied.*