

Media Release for Free and Reduced-Price Meals

Mesquite ISD announced its policy for providing free and reduced-price meals for children served under the current Federal income eligibility guidelines. Each school and the Food & Nutrition Services office has a copy of the policy, which may be reviewed by anyone on request.

Submit one free and reduced meal benefit application per household, even if the children in the household attend more than one school in Mesquite ISD.

Each year a meal application must be completed by all households. Households which are matched through state approved called Direct Certification will be notified by letter and **are not** required to complete an application.

The meal benefit application can be completed:

1. Download School Café smart phone app
2. Sign into School Café website www.schoolcafe.com from your desktop computer; or
3. Print the application from www.mesquiteisd.org on the Food & Nutrition Services web page

This is the fastest method to be approved. The student identification number or social security number, student's enrolled name, and birth date are required. An application number will be assigned after all steps are complete. Call the Meal Benefit Processing office at 972-882-5512 with the **application number** to check if received. Once processed an email will be sent.

Criteria for Free and Reduced-Price Meal Benefits

The following criteria will be used to determine a child's eligibility for free or reduced-price meal benefits:

Income

1. Household income that is at or below the income eligibility levels

Categorical or Automatic Eligibility

2. Household receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF); or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)

Program Participant

3. Child's status as a foster child, homeless, runaway, migrant, or displaced by a declared disaster
4. Child's enrollment in Head Start or Even Start

Income Eligibility

For those households that qualify for free or reduced-price meals based on income, an adult in the household must complete a free and reduced-price meal application online at www.schoolcafe.com or print one from the MISD web site; www.mesquiteisd.org the form can be found on the Food & Nutrition Services web page.

Those individuals filling out the application will need to provide the following information:

Only **one** application per family is needed.

1. Names of all household members
2. Amount, frequency, and source of current income for each household member
3. Last 4 digits of the Social Security number of the adult household member who signs the application or, if the adult does not have a social security number, check the box for "No Social Security number"

4. Signature of an adult household member attesting that the information provided is correct

Categorical or Program Eligibility

Food & Nutrition Services works with local agencies to identify all children who are categorically and program eligible. The **Meal Benefit Program will notify the households of these children that they do not need to complete an application.** Any household that does not receive notification should contact the Meal Benefit Processing office at 972-882-5512 or email foodnutrition@mesquiteisd.org with questions.

Any household that wishes to decline benefits should contact Meal Benefit Processing office at 972-882-5512 or email foodnutrition@mesquiteisd.org.

Applications can be submitted anytime during the school year. The information households provide on the application will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility. Applications may also be checked and verified by Meal Benefit Program at any time during the school year.

Determining Eligibility

Under the provisions of the free and reduced-price meal policy, Meal Benefit Program will review applications and determine eligibility. Households or guardians dissatisfied with the Reviewing Official's eligibility determination may wish to discuss the decision with the Reviewing Official on an informal basis. Households wishing to make a formal appeal for a hearing on the decision may make a request either orally or in writing to Bette Mogg, Director of Food and Nutrition Services, 405 E. Davis Mesquite, Texas 75149, at 972-882-5500.

Unexpected Circumstances

If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size increases, the household should contact the Meal Benefit Processing office at 972-882-5512 or email foodnutrition@mesquiteisd.org with questions. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household's income falls at or below the current Federal income eligibility guidelines.

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