



## Reminder about Free/Reduced Priced Meal Program

August 2022

Dear Parents,

As we welcome students back for the 2022-23 school year, we want to remind you about the benefit of school meals, which continue to be some of the healthiest meal options for students. Our mealtimes feature kid-approved foods and are an important part of the learning day.

Thanks to nationwide waivers for federally funded meal programs, school meals were free to all students through the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. At this time, these waivers have expired, and schools must return to charging for breakfast and lunch. Free or reduced-priced meals are only available to students who qualify for these benefits, but all students, regardless of family situations, are encouraged to dine in the cafeteria together. For the 2022-23 school year, breakfast will cost \$1.35 elementary and \$1.45 at secondary, and lunch will cost \$2.55 at elementary and \$2.80 to \$3.30 at secondary.

Our goal is to continue supporting all students and families by ensuring those who need free meals at school continue to receive them – especially while understanding that the pandemic has created new hardships for many families, including those who have never previously relied on school meals. We also understand that many households have not submitted a meal application in a few years.

We encourage all families, regardless of income, to complete and submit a short, confidential school meal application prior to the start of the school year to ensure that there are no gaps in meal benefits for students who qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Parents or guardians can submit this application online at <http://food.gulllakecs.org/Login.aspx> or in person at your child's school office. It's an easy and confidential way to ensure your child stays well-nourished at school.

For families with multiple students in the district, only one household application is needed. If qualified, meal benefits will apply for the entire school year. Should your household financial circumstances change at any time, please be aware that applications can also be submitted throughout the year. For families receiving other benefits, such as SNAP or TANF, you may receive notification that your student(s) is/are automatically eligible for free meals and do not need to submit an application.

If you have questions or need more information, please contact Josh Reames, Food Service Director at 548-3550 or [Chartwells@Gulllakecs.org](mailto:Chartwells@Gulllakecs.org).

Thank you,

Josh Reames, Food Service Director, Gull Lake Community Schools.