

**3542.31/Free and Reduced-Price Meals**

TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
POLICY MANUAL

SECTION: 3000  
CATEGORY: Business and Non-  
Instructional Operations  
POLICY CODE: 3542.31/Free and Reduced-  
Price Meals

**FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE MEALS**

**Policy Statement**

The Trumbull Board of Education agrees to participate in the National School Lunch Program and accepts responsibility for providing free and reduced-price meals to eligible students in the schools under its jurisdiction. The District shall establish an appeals process under which a parent/guardian may appeal a decision regarding his/her initial application for benefits, or any subsequent reduction or termination of benefits.

The schools shall not physically segregate or discriminate against any child because of his/her inability to pay for a meal. The names of children eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals shall not be published, posted, or announced in any manner, and there shall be no overt identification of any such children by use of special tokens or tickets, or by any other means.

The District shall ensure that, in its operation of the free and reduced-price meals program, no student shall be discriminated against because of race, color, religious creed, religion, sex, age, national origin, ancestry, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability (including, but not limited to, blindness), genetic information, or any other basis prohibited by Connecticut State and/or Federal non-discrimination laws. All children from the same household will receive the same benefits.

Adopted: 8/21/1973  
Revised: 11/22/1983, 3/27/2001,  
2/10/2004, 3/27/2018

**References**

- 7 C.F.R. §§ 245.5, 245.6, 245.7, 210.9
- Connecticut General Statutes §§ 10-215, 10-215b
  
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 0521: Non-Discrimination
- Trumbull Board of Education Policy Code 3542.43: Food Charging

**Regulations**

I. Responsibilities of the Director of the Food Services Department

The Director of the Food Services Department will enforce all State and Federal guidelines and is made responsible for:

1. Developing and distributing to each student's parent(s)/guardian(s) a letter explaining income eligibility criteria for free and reduced-price meals. Included will be an application form that interested parents are responsible for filling out and returning to the Food Services Department for review. The letter and application forms are available at each school's main and lunch offices and will be sent home with each child on the first day of every school year. The letter and application form will also be provided whenever a new student is enrolled.
2. Reviewing applications and determining eligibility based on household income and household size as indicated on the scale provided by the District. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be promptly notified of the acceptance or denial of their application. Applications and documentation of determination will be retained for a period of three years following the end of the school year to which they pertain.
3. Including in a rejection notification of:
  - a. reason(s) for denial;
  - b. right to appeal and instructions on how to do so; and
  - c. right to reapply at any time during the school year.
4. Informing the public of eligibility guidelines through local news media, local unemployment offices, and major employers contemplating layoffs.
5. Establishing a procedure for collecting reduced-price meal money and accounting for the total number of free, reduced-price, and full-price meals served.
6. Submitting to the Connecticut State Department of Education for approval any alterations, public announcements, etc., before implementation.
7. Arranging for students eligible for free and reduced-price meals to receive these meals with no physical segregation nor any other discrimination that would overtly identify recipients, including separate lunchrooms, serving lines, entrances, serving times, or menus.
8. Setting reduced-price charges for lunch at or below the maximum reduced price allowed by regulations and below the full price of the regular meal.
9. Complying with verification requirements of the Connecticut State Department of Education's Child Nutrition Programs.
10. Communicating and managing a fair appeals hearing procedure consistent with the Regulations below.

## II. Appeals Hearing Guidelines & Procedures

1. A family can appeal a decision made in respect to the family's application for free and reduced-price meals.
2. If school authorities feel that a family's financial situation has changed, and its students are no longer eligible for free or reduced-price meals, the Superintendent may convene a hearing to challenge the continued eligibility. In the event of such a challenge, the family will be given a reasonable period of time in advance of the hearing to review the information on which the challenge is based. Children will continue to receive free or reduced-price meals, as they did prior, until the conclusion of the hearing.
3. The designated hearing officer is the Trumbull Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee, provided that the hearing officer may not be the Director of the Food Services Department or any other individual who originally participated in the decision under appeal. The hearing official will accept a family's oral or written request for a hearing, will schedule a hearing with reasonable promptness and convenience, will give adequate notice as to the hearing's time and place, and will offer the family an opportunity to be assisted or represented by an attorney. The family may examine, prior to and during the hearing, any documents and records presented to support the decision under appeal, and may present oral or documentary evidence and arguments supporting its position. The family may question or refute any testimony or other evidence and may confront and cross-examine any adverse witness. All oral and documentary evidence will be entered into the hearing record, and the hearing officer's decision and reasons therefore will be communicated in writing to all parties and any designated representatives of the parties. The hearing record and final decision will be retained for a period of three years following the end of the school year to which they pertain.

## III. Special Circumstances

1. A child's statement of need is sufficient for providing assistance on a temporary basis. A family contact should be made immediately to determine extent and probable duration of need.
2. On a case-by-case basis, when a student is known to be eligible for free or reduced-price meals and the household fails to submit a confidential application, the Superintendent or his/her designee may complete an application for the student documenting how he/she knows that the household income qualifies the student for free or reduced-price meals. Parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student approved for free or reduced-price meals under this provision will be notified of the decision and given the opportunity to decline benefits.