

**Michigan Department of Education  
Michigan School Meals Program  
Parent/Caregiver Frequently Asked Questions**



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The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) will refer to the Healthy School Meals for All/Universal Meal funding as **the Michigan School Meals Program** for branding and communication purposes. Questions and responses will continue to be added to this document. Check back often for updates.

**General Questions**

**1. What is the Michigan School Meals Program?**

Michigan School Meals is a state-funded reimbursement program that provides all pre-K through grade 12 students attending a public-school, public-school academy, or an intermediate school district (ISD) with breakfast and lunch at no cost to the families.

**2. Do I need to fill out an application to qualify for Michigan School Meals?**

As a household, you are responsible for completing the Application for Summer EBT and Education Benefits for the Michigan School Meals Program or the Education Benefits Form. Without this information, your district could lose important state funding for educational programs that your students are entitled to. Your school district will be able to answer specific questions about completing these applications or forms.

**3. My child already receives free meals at school, do I still need to complete the Application for Summer EBT and Education Benefits for the Michigan School Meals Program or the Education Benefits Form?**

Yes! The information collected from the application is used to provide additional services and benefits beyond just school meals, like resources for classrooms, teachers, and children, guidance and college counselors, and health and wellness services.

**4. My child goes to an online school, will they be eligible for Michigan School Meals?**

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It depends. Students must be enrolled in a school that is eligible for the National School Lunch Program. You can contact your child's school to verify their enrollment.

**5. My child goes to a non-public school, will they be eligible for Michigan School Meals?**

The Michigan School Meals program is limited to meals served in public schools. However, many non-public schools work with their local district/public school academy to provide meals to students. Those relationships can continue so that students in non-public schools can receive nutritious meals daily.

**6. Will preschool students be included in the Michigan School Meals Program?**

Children in Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP) classrooms will continue to receive meals at no cost to families. Other tuition-based preschool programs for four-year olds may be participating in Michigan School Meals. Check with your local preschool program to see if they are participating.

**7. Will my child receive meals from Michigan School Meals on weekends, during the summer, or on other school breaks?**

No, the program is only offered on days when school is in session. There are other programs, such as the Summer Food Service Program and Child and Adult Care Food Program, that may offer meals on days when school is not in session.

To find meals or other food resources in your area, call 2-1-1, or call the Food and Other Resources Helpline at 888-544-8773.

**8. What if I do not want my child to receive meals through the Michigan School Meals Program, can I continue to pay the school directly?**

You cannot pay the school directly for these meals. You do have some options if you would prefer not to receive these meals. The first option is, you could pack a breakfast and/or lunch to send with your child to school. The second option is you could use the money that you would have spent on the school meal and donate it to the school. You will want to check with your school district if you choose to go that route.

**Meal Options**

**1. What types of food will my child be given through the Michigan School Meals Program?**

Schools participating in the Michigan School Meals Program must follow federal meal patterns and federal requirements for school meal service. Decisions about what specific foods to serve and how they are prepared are made by local school food service staff.

## **2. How can I advocate for improved meal quality at my child's school?**

Parents and students should first contact the school's food service director with concerns related to meal quality. While meal pattern requirements are set at the federal level, school menus are set at the local school or school district level.

Federal requirements include minimum servings for vegetables, fruits, milk, grains, and meat or meat alternate components. In addition, schools must adhere to requirements for calories, trans fat, saturated fat, and sodium content.

### **Meal Service in the Michigan School Meals Program**

#### **1. Can meals be sent home like they were during the pandemic?**

No. Meals may not be taken off campus, sent home, delivered, or picked up by parents or others. Meals must be served at the school.

#### **2. Can my child get a second meal for free while at school?**

No, the Michigan School Meals Program provides a maximum of one free breakfast and one free lunch per day to students at participating schools. The school may offer a second breakfast and/or a second lunch as a la carte items.

### **Financial Questions in the Michigan School Meals Program**

#### **1. My child already has a prepaid account that they use for meals, a la carte milk, and/or a la carte snack items at school. Will the money in that account be refunded to me?**

If your child's school will sell a la carte items or second meals next school year, the funds can remain on the students' prepaid accounts to pay for these a la carte items. Refunds should be made if a la carte will not be available for students to purchase and/or by parent request.

### **Other**

#### **1. My question was not answered in this FAQ. Who should I contact?**

Additional questions can be sent to your local school district.