



## FOOD SERVICE

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### PUBLIC RELEASE

**Westlake City Schools** today announced its 2025-2026 program year policy free and reduced-price meals for students unable to pay the full price of meals served under the National School Lunch Program. Each school office and the central office has a copy of the policy, which may be reviewed by any interested party. The State of Ohio Budget for school year 2025-2026 includes funding to cover the cost of reduced meals for lunch. This provision allows schools to provide no cost meals to reduced price meal eligible students.

The Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines will be used to determine eligibility. Children from families whose annual income is at or below the federal guidelines are eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

Application packet is located online for all parents or guardians. To apply for free and reduced-price benefits, households should complete an application and return it to the school. Additional copies are available at each school. A complete application is required. Households which currently receive Special Nutrition Assistance Program Benefits (SNAP, formally known as food stamps) or Ohio Works First (OWF) funds for a child must provide the child's name, the SNAP or OWF case number and signature of an adult household member on the application. Households that do not receive SNAP or OWF funds must provide the names of all household members, the last four digits of the Social Security Number of the adult signing the application or state "none" if the adult does not have a Social Security Number, the amount and source of income received by each household member (state the monthly income) and the signature of an adult household member. If any of this information is missing, the school cannot process the application.

**FREE HEALTH CARE:** Families with children eligible for school meals may be eligible for free health care coverage through Medicaid and/or Ohio's Healthy Start & Healthy Families programs. These programs include coverage for doctor visits, immunizations, physicals, prescriptions, dental, vision, mental health, substance abuse and more. Please call 1-800-324-8680 for more information or to request an application. Information can also be found on the web at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/ohp/consumers/familychild.stm>. Anyone who has an Ohio Medicaid card is already receiving these services.

The information provided on the application is confidential and will only be used for the purpose to determine eligibility and may be verified at any time during the school year by school or other program official. To discourage the possibility of misrepresentation, the application forms contain a statement above the space for signature certifying that all information furnished is true and correct. Applications are being made in connection with the receipt of federal funds. Schools or other officials may check the information on the application at any time during the school year.

Deliberate misrepresentation of information may subject the applicant to prosecution under applicable state and federal laws.

Households will be notified of the approval or denial of benefits.

Foster children are categorically eligible for free meal benefits regardless of the household's income. If a family has foster children living with them and wishes to apply for such meals or milk for them, contact the school for more information.

Under the provision of the policy, Mrs. Lisa Zuk (440.835.6319 or <mailto:zuk@wlake.org>) will review applications and determine eligibility. If a parent or guardian disagrees with the decision on the application or the result of verification, the decision may be discussed with the determining official on an informal basis. If a formal appeal is desired, the household has the right to a fair hearing. A fair hearing can be requested either orally or in writing from: Mr. Adam House – 24365 Hilliard Blvd. – Westlake, OH 44145  
PH: 440.835.6319 – Email: <mailto:housea@wlake.org>.

The policy contains an outline of the hearing procedure.

Households may apply for benefits any time during the school year. If a household is not currently eligible and if the household size increases or income decreases because of unemployment or other reasons, the family should contact the school to file a new application. Such changes may make the children of the family eligible for free or reduced-price benefits if the family income falls at or below the levels shown above.

### **Nondiscrimination Statement**

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](#), (AD-3027) found online at: [How to File a Complaint](#), and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

1. **mail:**  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **fax:**  
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **email:**  
[program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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