

1) Are meals still free for ALL students this school year? No. The federally funded universal meal program that provided free school meals during COVID has expired.

2) My children qualify for Free/Reduced meals. Do I still have to pay for meals? If you have completed the 2025-2026 Free and Reduced meal application and qualified for Free or Reduced meals, you DO NOT have to pay for breakfast or lunch. Students who qualify for Reduced priced meals do not have to pay because the State picks up the remainder of the cost for reduced priced meals.

3) My children qualified for Free/Reduced meals the previous school year. Do I still have to fill out an application for the coming school year? Yes, parents must fill out an application every school year to receive Free/Reduced meals. Free/Reduced meals roll over for the first 30 days of the school year, however if you do not fill out an application within those 30 days, your child will fall under the paid category and you will be charged up until you fill out a new application for Free/Reduced meals.

4) My child qualified through SNAP/TANF – do I have to pay for meals? Families who qualified through SNAP/TANF do NOT have to pay for school meals.

5) Is it too late to fill out the application for Free and Reduced lunches? No, applications are still being accepted. Visit the food services department online at <https://www.pemberton.k12.nj.us/Page/1305> to apply online or print a copy to fill out.

6) My child does not qualify for Free or Reduced lunches. How do I pay for meals? Food Services accepts checks, cash and money orders. Parents may also set up an account at www.myschoolbucks.com and use their credit card to pay for meals. Students may charge meals, and their parents will be notified of their outstanding balance by the cashier.

7) What happens if I forget to pay for my child's meals? Please refer to the food service district policy section at <https://www.straussesmay.com/seportal/Public/DistrictPolicy.aspx?policyid=8500&id=dbcfea39423746028f70325837bfa033> regarding meal charges.

8) Where can I find the school menus? All menus are posted on the district website on the Food Services page at <https://www.pemberton.k12.nj.us/site/Default.aspx?PageID=1300>. Click on the My School Menus link, which is located right above the Free and Reduced Meal applications. You will be redirected to the menu page where you will select the school and menu type that you would like to view. In addition, paper menus are sent home in grades Pre-K through 6th, and available in the main offices of grades 7 through 12.

9) How do I print the menu and view the nutritional information? On the menu each option can be clicked on to view the nutritional label of that item. To print the menu, you would click on the "Print Menu" button on the right side of your screen. You will then be able to select which menu items and nutritional information you would like to view and print. Please note that not all items

will fit on one page when printing. You can hit the fit to page button during the print selection but be aware that non-entree items will be hidden.

10) How do I qualify for Summer EBT? In order to receive the Summer EBT parents must fill out a Free/Reduced meal application between 7/1/2025- 8/31/2026. Please note that if you qualify for Free and Reduced Meals through NJEIE, you won't be eligible to receive the Summer EBT because this is a state program with separate income guidelines from the federal program.

11) What is the difference between the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines and the New Jersey Expanded Income Eligibility Guidelines? The State of New Jersey has increased the amount of income a family can earn and qualify for free/reduced school meals. The online and paper applications show the federal income amounts; however, a family who applies will have their eligibility determined by the expanded NJ income amounts. Parents will be notified when they are ineligible for Federal Income but qualify for State. Amounts a family may earn and still qualify are shown in the chart below.

12) Why does my child have to choose a fruit or vegetable with their meal when they don't want to eat it? School meals are healthy meals that are required to meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. School meal programs must meet strict federal nutrition standards. These standards, also referred to as "the meal pattern," require schools to offer students the right balance of fruits, vegetables, low-fat or fat-free milk, whole grains and lean protein with every meal.

13) Does my child qualify for free/reduced meals if they receive Medicaid? Your child may qualify for free or reduced-price meals if they are receiving Medicaid for the 25/26 school year. They would also qualify for 2026 Summer EBT. The State of NJ provides the list of students who attend Pemberton who qualify for Medicaid.