# St. Jerome Regional School

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. St. Jerome Regional School offers healthy meals every school day. Lunch costs $4.50 for the 26-27 school year. **Your child(ren) may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals**.

This packet includes an application for free and reduced price meal benefits, and a set of detailed instructions. Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

If you have received a **NOTICE OF DIRECT CERTIFICATION** letter for free meals, **do not** complete the application. But **do** let the school know if any children in your household are not listed on the **NOTICE OF DIRECT CERTIFICATION** letter you received.

1. WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS OR SPECIAL MILK?
    - All children in households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly the Food Stamp Program) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits are eligible for free meals.
    - Foster children who are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.
    - Children participating in their school's Head Start program are eligible for free meals.
    - Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals.
    - Children may receive free or reduced price meals if your household's income is within the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Your children may qualify for free or reduced price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

**INCOME ELIGIBILITY FREE MEALS JULY 1, 2026 TO JUNE 30, 2027**

| Family Size | Annual | Monthly | Twice Per Month | Every Two Weeks | Weekly |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | $20,748 | $1,729 | $865 | $798 | $399 |
| **2** | $28,132 | $2,345 | $1,173 | $1,082 | $541 |
| **3** | $35,516 | $2,960 | $1,480 | $1,366 | $683 |
| **4** | $42,900 | $3,575 | $1,788 | $1,650 | $825 |
| **5** | $50,284 | $4,191 | $2,096 | $1,934 | $967 |
| **6** | $57,668 | $4,806 | $2,403 | $2,218 | $1,109 |
| **7** | $65,052 | $5,421 | $2,711 | $2,502 | $1,251 |
| **8** | $72,436 | $6,037 | $3,019 | 2,786 | $1,393 |
| | | | | | |
| **Each additional family member add:** | +7,384 | +616 | +308 | +284 | +142 |

**INCOME ELIGIBILITY REDUCED PRICED MEALS JULY 1, 2026 TO JUNE 20, 2027**

| Family Size | Annual | Monthly | Twice Per Month | Every Two Weeks | Weekly |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1** | $29,526 | $2,461 | $1,231 | $1,136 | $568 |
| **2** | $40,034 | $3,337 | $1,669 | $1,540 | $770 |
| **3** | $50,542 | $4,212 | $2,106 | $1,944 | $972 |
| **4** | $61,050 | $5,088 | $2,544 | $2,349 | $1,175 |
| **5** | $71,558 | $5,964 | $2,982 | $2,753 | $1,377 |
| **6** | $82,066 | $6,839 | $3,420 | $3,157 | $1,579 |
| **7** | $92,574 | $7,715 | $3,858 | $3,561 | $1,781 |
| **8** | $103,082 | $8,591 | $4,296 | $3,965 | $1,983 |
| | | | | | |
| **Each additional family member add:** | +$10,508 | +$876 | +$438 | +$405 | +$203 |

2. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILDREN QUALIFY AS HOMELESS, MIGRANT, OR RUNAWAY? Do the members of your household lack a permanent address? Are you staying together in a shelter, hotel, or other temporary housing arrangement? Does your family relocate on a seasonal basis? Are any children living with you who have chosen to leave their prior family or household? If you believe children in your household meet these descriptions and haven't been told your children will get free meals, call or email SJRS @ 570-668-2757 or ldaukshus@sjrschool.com

3. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD? **No.** ***Use one Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application for all students in your household.*** We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information. You may request a paper application from the school at any time. Return the completed application to: Laurie Daukshus, 50 Meadow Avenue, Tamaqua, PA, 18252

4. SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE ALREADY APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS**? No, but read the letter you received carefully and follow the instructions**. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification letter, contact ldaukshus@sjrschool.com immediately.

5. CAN I APPLY ONLINE? **Yes! You are encouraged to complete an online application instead of a paper application if you are able**. The online application has the same requirements and will ask you for the same information as the paper application. Visit www.schoolcafe.com/SJRS to apply for benefits. Or visit the PA Department of Human Services website at www.compass.state.pa.us.

6. MY CHILD'S APPLICATION WAS APPROVED LAST YEAR. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT A NEW ONE? **Yes**. Your child's application is only good for that school year and for the first 30 operating school days of this school year. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year.

7. I GET WIC. CAN MY CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS? Children in households participating in WIC **may** be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Complete an application at www.schoolcafe.com/SJRS

8. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? **Yes**. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.

9. IF I DON'T QUALIFY NOW, MAY I APPLY LATER? **Yes**, you may apply at any time during the school year. For example, children with a parent or guardian who becomes unemployed may become eligible for free and/or reduced price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.

10. WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE SCHOOL'S DECISION ABOUT MY APPLICATION? You should talk to school officials. You also may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to: Amy Hannis-Miskar at 570-668-2757 or 50 Meadow Avenue, Tamaqua, PA 18252

11. MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN? **Yes**. You, your children, or other household members do not have to be U.S. citizens to apply for free or reduced price meals.

12. WHAT IF MY INCOME IS NOT ALWAYS THE SAME? List the amount that you normally receive. For example, if you normally make $1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only made $900, put down that you made $1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but do not include it if you only work overtime sometimes. If you have lost a job or had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income.

13. WHAT IF SOME HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS HAVE NO INCOME TO REPORT? Household members may not receive some types of income we ask you to report on the application or may not receive income at all. Whenever this happens, write a 0 in the field. However, if any income fields are left empty or blank, those will also be counted as zeroes. Be careful when leaving income fields blank, as we will assume you meant to do so.

14. WE ARE IN THE MILITARY. DO WE REPORT OUR INCOME DIFFERENTLY? Your basic pay and cash bonuses must be reported as income. If you get any cash value allowances for off-base housing, food, or clothing, or receive Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance payments, it must also be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income. Any additional combat pay resulting from deployment is also excluded from income.

15. WHAT IF THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SPACE ON THE APPLICATION FOR MY FAMILY? List any additional household members on a separate piece of paper and attach it to your application. Contact Laurie Daukshus at 570-668-2757 or 50 Meadow Avenue, Tamaqua, PA 18252 to receive a second application.

16. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for **SNAP** or other assistance benefits, visit www.compass.state.pa.us, contact your local county assistance office, or call 1-800-692-7462.

If you have other questions or need help, call 570-668-2757.

Sincerely,

Laurie J. Daukshus

SJRS Foods Service Director

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted 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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

ATTENTION: If you speak Spanish, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Contact your child's school.
ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Comuníquese con la escuela de su niño.