FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT EDUCATION AND NUTRITION BENEFITS

Dear Parent/Guardian:

1. WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE MEALS?
   - Children in households that receive benefits from the Food Assistance Program (FAP), the Family Independence Program (FIP), or the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) can get free meals.
   - Foster children who are under the care of a foster agency or the court can get free meals.
   - Children who are in their school's Head Start program can get free meals.
   - Children who are homeless, runaway, or migrant can get free meals.
   - Children can get free or reduced-price meals if your household income is within the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Your children may qualify if your household income is at or below the limits on this chart.

FEDERAL INCOME ELIGIBILITY CHART for School Year 2026-2027

Household Size	Annually	Monthly	Weekly
1	29,526	2,461	568
2	40,034	3,337	770
3	50,542	4,212	972
4	61,050	5,088	1,175
5	71,558	5,964	1,377
6	82,066	6,839	1,579
7	92,574	7,715	1,781
8	103,082	8,591	1,983
Each additional person:	10,508	876	203

2. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILDREN QUALIFY AS HOMELESS, MIGRANT, OR RUNAWAY?

   Think about the following questions:
   - Does your family not have a permanent place to live?
   - Are you staying in a shelter, hotel, or other temporary place?
   - Does your family move from place to place during certain seasons for work?
   - Are there children living with you who left their previous home on their own?

   If you think any children in your home fit these descriptions and you have not been told that they will get free meals, please call or e-mail **Leslie Madill, 734-424-4150 ext. 5018, madill@dexterschools.org**

3. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD? No. *Use one application for all students in your household.* We cannot approve your application if it is not complete, so make sure to fill in all required information. Return the completed application to: **Dexter F&N 2704 Baker Rd Dexter MI 48130**.

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 make sure to read the letter carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were not listed on the eligibility letter, contact, contact Dara Wandyg at 734-424-4185 right away.

5. CAN I APPLY ONLINE? Yes! If you can, it's best to fill out the online application instead of the paper one. The online form asks for the same information and has the same requirements. Go to **https://dexter.familyportal.cloud/**to get started or to learn more about how to apply online. Contact **Dara Wandyg, Dexter F&N 2704 Baker Rd Dexter MI 48130**, 734**-424-4185, fandn@dexterschools.org if you any questions about the online application.**

6. MY CHILD'S APPLICATION WAS APPROVED LAST YEAR. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT A NEW ONE? Yes. Yes. Your child's application is only good for that school year and for the first few days of the new school year, until **10/16/2026**. You must send in a new application unless the school has told you that your child is already eligible for this year. If you do not send in a new application that is approved by the school or you have not been told that your child is eligible for free or reduced meals, your child will be charged the full price for meals.
7. I GET WIC. CAN MY CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS? Children in households that receive WIC may still qualify for other benefits. Please submit an application.
8. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? Yes. We may ask you to send written proof of the 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 if the household income drops below the income limit.
10. WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE SCHOOL'S DECISION ABOUT MY APPLICATION? You should first talk with school officials. You can also ask for a hearing by calling or writing to: **Ryan Bruder, 2704 Baker Rd Dexter MI 48130 or bruderr@dexterschools.org.**
11. MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOULD IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN? Yes. You, your children, or other household members do not have to be U.S. citizens to apply.
12. WHAT IF MY INCOME CHANGES FROM MONTH TO MONTH? Write down the amount you normally get. For example, if you usually make $1000 a month but last month you made $900 because you missed work, write $1000. If you normally get overtime, include it. If you only get overtime once in a while, do not include it. If you lost your job or your hours or pay were reduced, list 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, please write a 0 in the field. However, if any income fields are left empty or blank, those will also be counted as zero. Please 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? You must report your basic pay and any cash bonuses as income. If you get cash allowances for off-base housing, food, or clothing, you must include those too. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance. Any combat pay you get because of deployment should also *not* be included as income.
15. WHAT IF THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SPACE ON THE APPLICATION FOR MY FAMILY? If you run out of space, write the names of additional household members on another piece of paper and attach it to your application. You may also contact **Dara Wandyg, 734-424-4185, fandn@dexterschools.org** to get a second application.
16. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE CAN APPLY FOR? To learn how to apply for the Food Assistance Program (FAP) or other types of help, contact your local assistance office at https://newmibridges.michigan.gov/.

If you have other questions or need help, call Student Account Manager Dara Wandyg 734-424-4185.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Mattison

DCS Food & Nutrition Director

734-424-4100 ext.1501