

## SchoolCafé Parent/Guardian Guide

### How to Create an Account and Complete a Meal Application

**Use this guide to complete a Free and Reduced-Price Meal Application online through SchoolCafé.**

This guide includes step-by-step instructions and screenshots for families completing the process on a computer or laptop.

**Start here:** [www.schoolcafe.com](http://www.schoolcafe.com)

### What this guide covers

**1**

**Create a SchoolCafé account**

**2**

**Complete and submit a meal application**

## Before You Begin

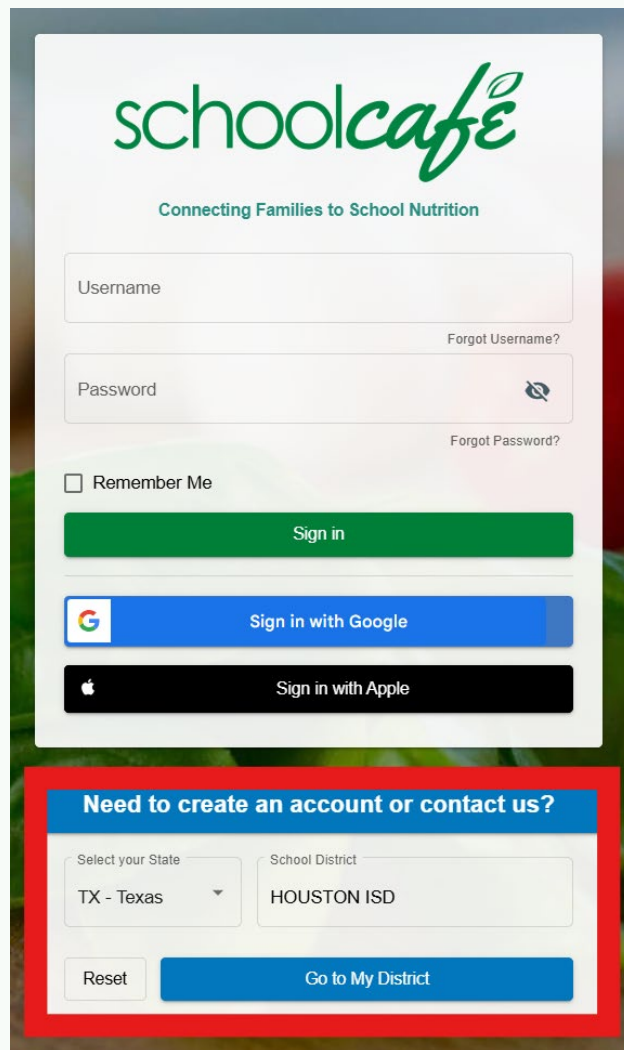
- Use a computer or laptop for the best experience.
- Have your parent or guardian contact information available.
- Have student information ready, including name, date of birth, school, and grade.
- If applicable, have your SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR EDG number available.

## 1. Create a SchoolCafé Account

1

### Go to SchoolCafé.

On a computer or laptop, go to [www.schoolcafe.com](http://www.schoolcafe.com).

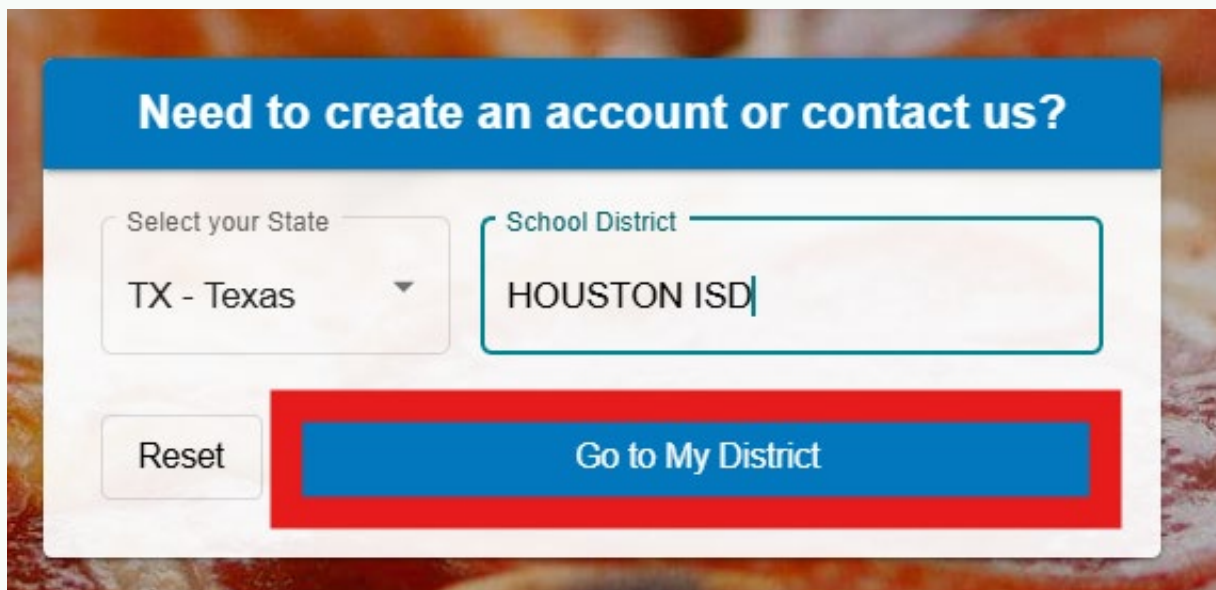


The screenshot shows the SchoolCafé website interface. At the top is the 'schoolcafé' logo with the tagline 'Connecting Families to School Nutrition'. Below the logo are input fields for 'Username' and 'Password', each with a 'Forgot' link. There is a 'Remember Me' checkbox and a green 'Sign in' button. Below these are buttons for 'Sign in with Google' and 'Sign in with Apple'. At the bottom, a red-bordered box highlights the account creation section, which has a blue header 'Need to create an account or contact us?'. This section contains a 'Select your State' dropdown menu (showing 'TX - Texas'), a 'School District' input field (showing 'HOUSTON ISD'), a 'Reset' button, and a blue 'Go to My District' button.

2

## Choose the district.

Select TX - Texas as the state, enter HOUSTON ISD as the school district, then click Go to My District.

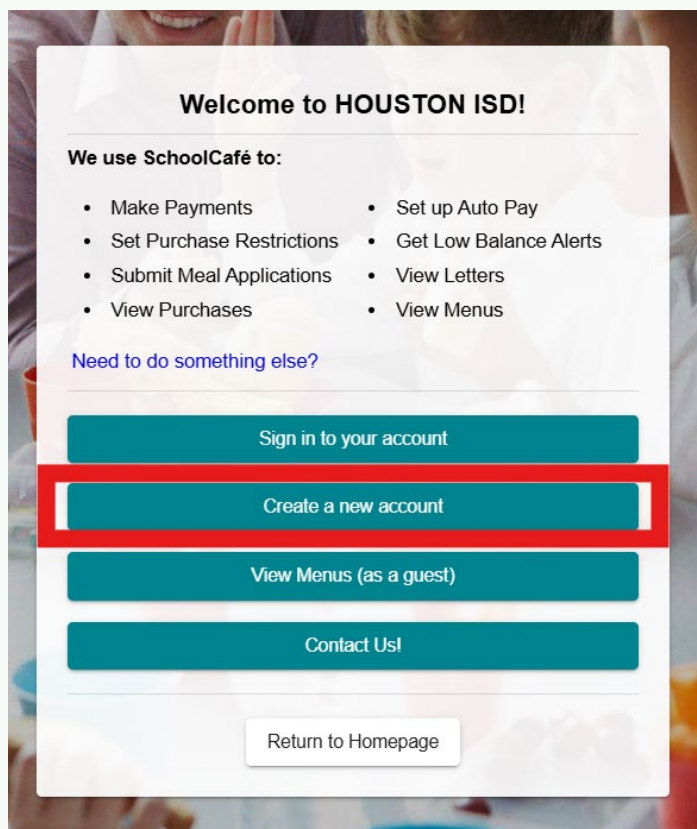


The screenshot shows a web form titled "Need to create an account or contact us?". It features two input fields: "Select your State" with a dropdown menu showing "TX - Texas", and "School District" with a text box containing "HOUSTON ISD". Below these fields are two buttons: "Reset" and "Go to My District". The "Go to My District" button is highlighted with a red rectangular border.

3

## Create a new account.

On the Houston ISD welcome screen, click Create a new account.

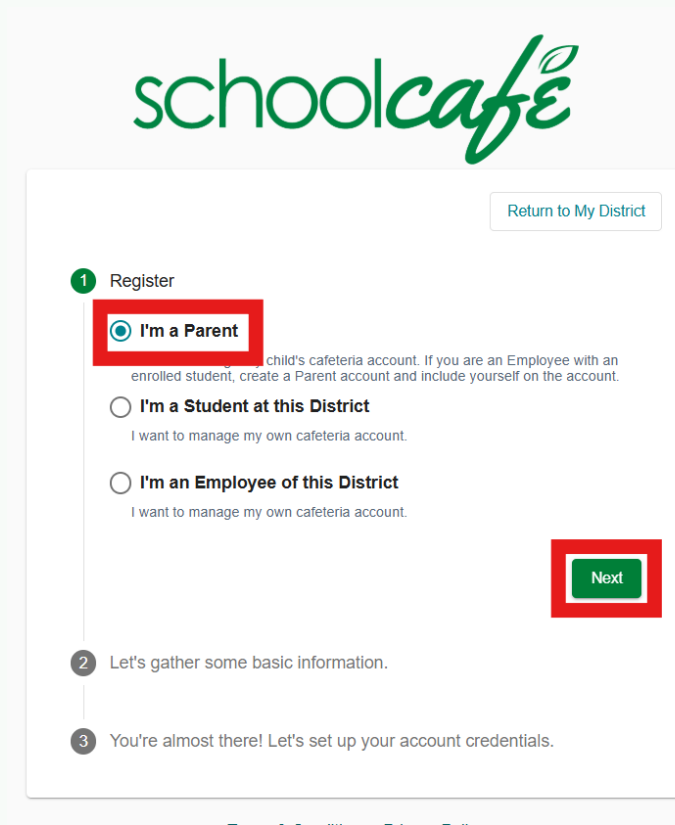


The screenshot shows the "Welcome to HOUSTON ISD!" screen. It lists services provided by SchoolCafé: "Make Payments", "Set Purchase Restrictions", "Submit Meal Applications", "View Purchases", "Set up Auto Pay", "Get Low Balance Alerts", "View Letters", and "View Menus". Below this list is a link "Need to do something else?". At the bottom, there are four buttons: "Sign in to your account", "Create a new account", "View Menus (as a guest)", and "Contact Us!". The "Create a new account" button is highlighted with a red rectangular border. At the very bottom, there is a "Return to Homepage" button.

4

**Register as a parent.**

Select I'm a Parent, then click Next.

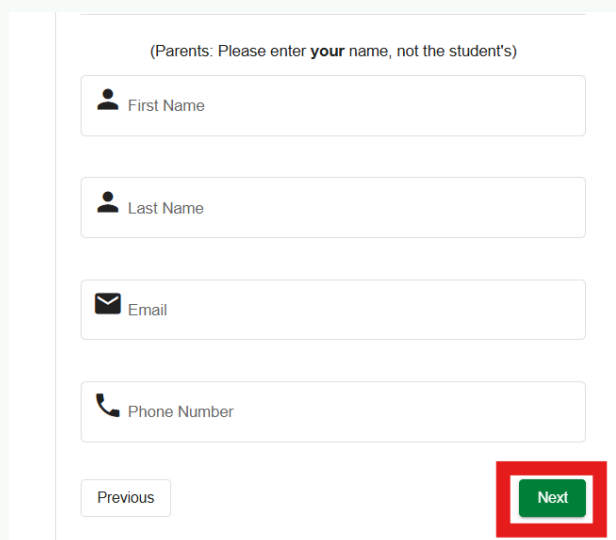


The image shows the SchoolCafe registration interface. At the top is the 'schoolcafé' logo. A 'Return to My District' link is in the top right. The main content area is titled '1 Register'. It features three radio button options: 'I'm a Parent' (selected and highlighted with a red box), 'I'm a Student at this District', and 'I'm an Employee of this District'. Each option has a brief description. A green 'Next' button is highlighted with a red box. Below the registration section are two steps: '2 Let's gather some basic information.' and '3 You're almost there! Let's set up your account credentials.'

5

**Enter your contact information.**

Enter your first name, last name, email, and phone number, then click Next.



The image shows the contact information form. It starts with the instruction '(Parents: Please enter **your** name, not the student's)'. There are four input fields: 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Email', and 'Phone Number', each with a corresponding icon. At the bottom left is a 'Previous' button, and at the bottom right is a green 'Next' button highlighted with a red box.

## 6

### Create your login credentials.

Enter a username, password, security question, answer, and language preference.

3 You're almost there! Let's set up your account credentials.

Username  cristyhm@yahoo.com is available.

 Password 

 Confirm Password 

 Select a Security Question ▼

 Answer

Select language  English ▼

☒ I accept the [Terms & Conditions](#)

## 7

### Accept the terms and create the account.

Check I accept the Terms & Conditions, then click Create My Account.

3 You're almost there! Let's set up your account credentials.

Username  cristylihm@yahoo.com is available.

 Password 

 Confirm Password 

 Select a Security Question 

 Answer

Select language  English 

☒ I accept the [Terms & Conditions](#)

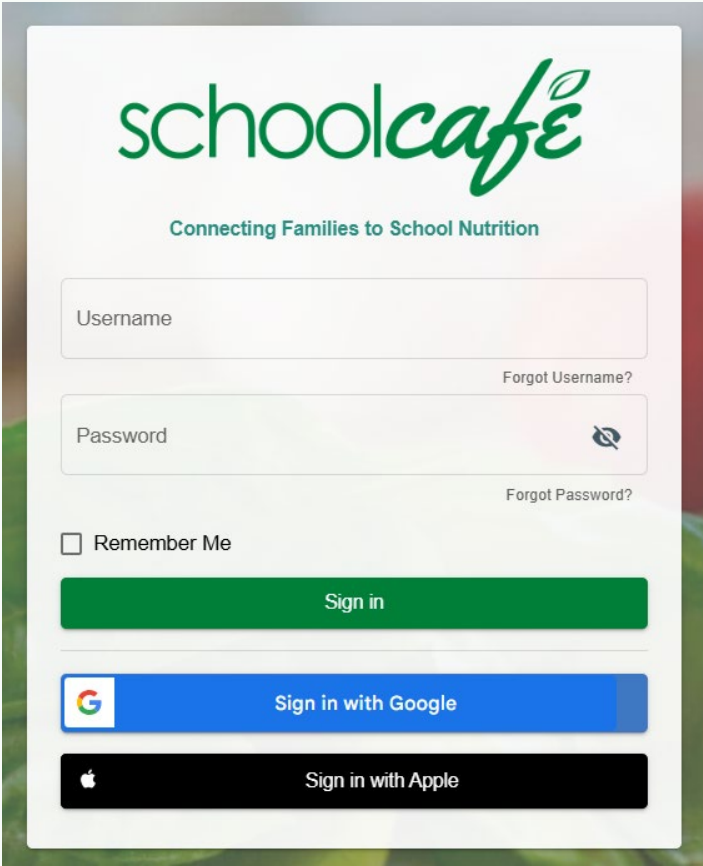
**You now have a SchoolCafé account. Next, sign in to complete the meal application.**

## 2. Apply for Meal Benefits

1

### Sign in to SchoolCafé.

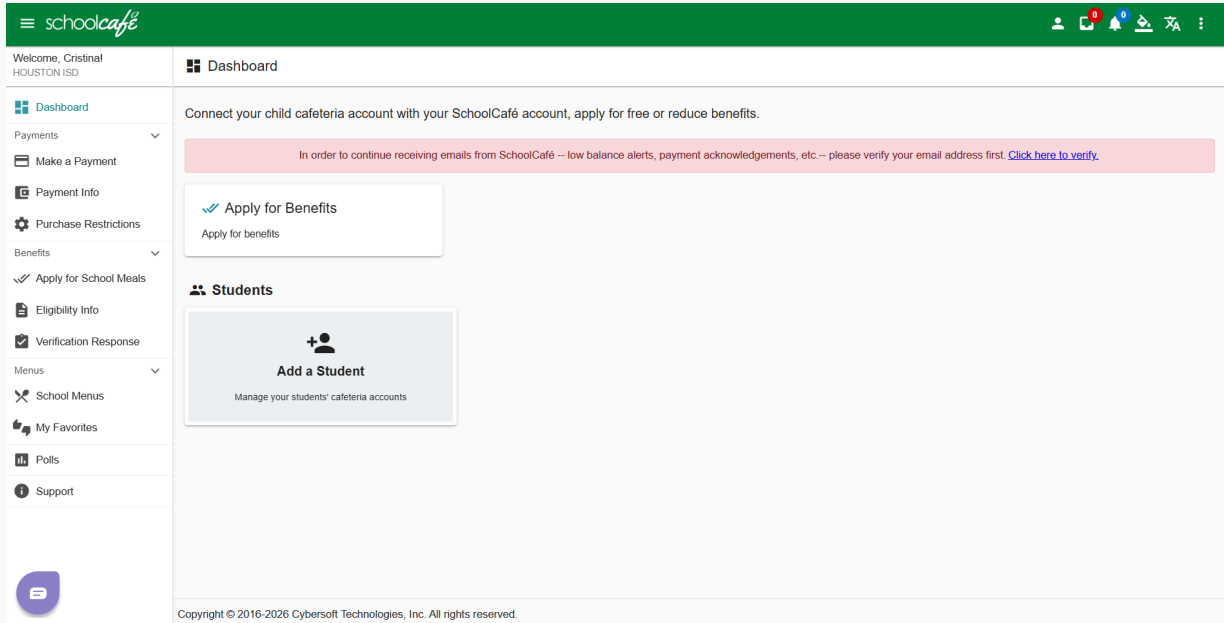
Go to [www.schoolcafe.com](http://www.schoolcafe.com) and sign in using your SchoolCafé username and password.

The image shows the SchoolCafé login interface. At the top is the 'schoolcafé' logo in a green, cursive-style font, with the tagline 'Connecting Families to School Nutrition' below it. There are two input fields: 'Username' and 'Password'. To the right of the 'Username' field is a link that says 'Forgot Username?'. To the right of the 'Password' field is a toggle icon (an eye with a slash) and a link that says 'Forgot Password?'. Below these fields is a checkbox labeled 'Remember Me'. There are three large buttons: a green 'Sign in' button, a blue 'Sign in with Google' button with the Google 'G' logo, and a black 'Sign in with Apple' button with the Apple logo.

## 2

### Open the dashboard.

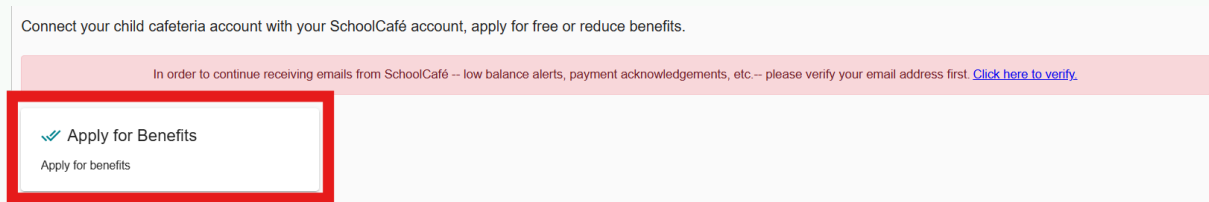
After signing in, you will see the SchoolCafé dashboard.



## 3

### Start the application.

Click Apply for Benefits.



## 4

### Review the household letter.

Review the Letter to the Household. You may download a copy for your records or click Next to continue.

#### Household Letter

This letter, provided by your district, lists all of the rules, expectations, and other important information you will need while filling out your application.

Please complete the meal application **only if** your school is 1 of the 33 Non-CEP campuses below:

Horn ES, Oak Forest ES, River Oaks ES, Roberts ES, Travis ES, West University ES, Kinder HSPVA, Baker Montessori, Briar Meadow Charter, Bush ES, Condit ES, Harvard ES, Helms ES, Kolter ES, Mandarin Immersion, Poe ES, Sinclair ES, Twain ES, Wharton ES, Hogg MS, Lanier MS, Pin Oak MS, T.H. Rogers MS, Bellaire HS, Carnegie Vanguard HS, Challenge HS, DeBakey HS, Energy Inst., Heights HS, Houston Acad. Intl. Studies, Lamar HS, Waltrip HS, and Westside HS

Houston Independent School District  
Nutrition Services  
6801 Bennington St., Houston, TX 77028  
National School Lunch School Breakfast Program  
School Year 2026-2027



Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Houston Independent School District offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast is free; lunch costs \$4.00. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced-price meals. Reduced-price is \$0.60 for lunch. If you received a notification letter that a child is already certified for free or reduced-price meals, do not complete an application. Let the school know if any children in the household attending school are not listed in the letter.

The questions and answers that follow and attached directions provide additional information on how to complete the application. Complete only one application for all the students in the household and return the completed application to your child's school. If you have questions about applying for free or reduced-price meals, contact 713-491-5944 or email [EligibilityInfo@houstonisd.org](mailto:EligibilityInfo@houstonisd.org).

#### 1. Who Can Get Free Meals?

- **Income**—Children can get free or reduced-price meals if a household's gross income is within the limits described in the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines.
- **Special Assistance Program Participants**—Children in households receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Food Distribution Program for Households on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), are eligible for free meals.
- **Foster**—Foster children who are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.
- **Head Start or Early Head Start**—Children participating in these

#### 4. If I Don't Qualify Now, May I Apply Later? Yes. Apply at any time during the school year. A child who is a parent or guardian who becomes unemployed may become eligible for free and reduced-price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.

#### 5. What If My Income Is Not Always the Same? List the amount normally received. If a household member lost a job or had hours/wages reduced, use current income.

#### 6. We Are in the Military. Do We Report Our Income Differently? Basic pay and cash bonus must be reported as income. Any cash value allowances for off-base housing, food, or clothing, or Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance payments count as income. If housing is part of the military

[Download Household Letter](#)

## 5

### Confirm applicant information.

Review the parent or guardian information. If everything is correct, click Save Applicant Information.

#### Confirm Applicant Information

First Name  
[Redacted]

Last Name  
[Redacted]

Email  
[Redacted]

Phone  
[Redacted]

Street Address  
[Redacted]

City  
[Redacted]

State  
TX - Texas

ZIP  
[Redacted]

Cancel

Save Applicant Information

6

## Certify the information.

Check the certification box, then click Next.

Certify

Please provide honest acknowledgement of the terms and conditions for this application before proceeding.

TX

Edit 

☒ I certify (promise) that all information on this application is true and that all income is reported (where required). I understand that the school will receive the information I gave. I understand that school officials may verify (check) the information. I understand that if I purposely give false information, my children will lose benefits, and I may be prosecuted.

Previous

Next

7

## Add a student.

Click Add a Student to add the student to the meal application.

Students

Assistance

Household

Review

Details

Submit

Students

Enter all K-12 students in **this school district**.

Add a Student+ 

You do not have any students associated with your SchoolCafé account. You need to add at least one student.

Previous

### 3. Add Students to the Meal Application

#### 8 Enter student information.

Enter the student's first name, last name, date of birth, school, and grade. Select Yes or No for foster, homeless, migrant, runaway, Head Start, and income questions. Then click Save & Add More or Save Student.

*Note: You do not have to enter the Student ID to continue completing the application.*

**Add a Student**

Student ID

First Name  
Nina

Last Name  
Luna

Middle Name

Date of Birth  
6/15/2004

School  
Hogg MS

Grade

Is this student a Foster, Homeless, Migrant, Runaway, Head Start child?  
☐ Yes ☒ No

Does this student receive income?  
☐ Yes ☐ No

\* required

Cancel Save Student Save & Add More

#### 9 Add all students in the household.

If there are more HISD students in your household, click Add a Student again. Continue until every student has been added, then click Next.

**Students** Assistance Household Review Details Submit

**Students**  
Enter all K-12 students in this school district.

Add a Student

**Luna, Nina**  
Hogg MS,  
Date of Birth: 06/15/2004  
Income: None  
Foster/Homeless/Migrant/Runaway/Head Start: No

Previous Next

## 4. Declining Benefits and Assistance Information

**Declining benefits:** If you decline benefits, your student will have a paid status. Lunch meals will be charged to your student's account, and you will be responsible for paying the account balance. If you do not want to decline, continue with the application and click Next.

10

### Enter SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR information.

If you receive SNAP, TANF, or FDPIR benefits, select Yes and enter your 8- or 9-digit EDG number. If you do not receive these benefits, select No. Then click Next.

Students

★ Assistance

Household

Review

Details

Submit

★ Assistance

Do you receive any assistance from SNAP, TANF?

☐ Yes

☒ No

Previous

Next

## 5. Enter Household Member Information

### 11 Add household members and income.

Enter all members of your household, including adults and any other children who were not added as students. If a household member receives income, select Yes and enter the gross pre-tax amount and frequency. If the member does not receive income, select No. Then click Add this Member.

The screenshot shows a form titled "Update Applicant". It has a "Name:" field with a partial name "C". Below it is a question "Does this member receive income?" with radio buttons for "Yes" (selected) and "No". A red box highlights the "Yes" option. Below this is a text prompt: "If this household member receives income, please enter the **GROSS (pre-tax)** amount and frequency." There are three input fields for income: "Income (Work)" with a value of "\$ 2000", "Income (Assistance)" with a value of "\$", and "Income (Other)" with a value of "\$". Each has a "Frequency" dropdown menu. The "Income (Work)" dropdown is set to "Every 2 Weeks". A red box highlights the "Income (Work)" field and its frequency dropdown. Below these fields, it says "Monthly: \$4,000.00 | Annually: \$52,000.00". At the bottom, it says "Annual Income: \$52,000.00". There are "Cancel" and "Save Member" buttons at the bottom right.

### 12 Confirm household size.

After entering all household members, review the total household member count and click Next.

The screenshot shows a confirmation screen titled "Students". It lists a student: "Luna, Nina", "Hogg MS", "Date of Birth: 06/15/2004", "Income: None", and "Foster/Homeless/Migrant/Runaway/Head Start: No". Below this is a field for "Total Household members (Students, Children and Adults)" with the value "2". A red box highlights this field. At the bottom, there are "Previous" and "Next" buttons. The "Next" button is highlighted with a red box.

## 6. Review, Complete Details, and Submit

### 13 Review the application.

Review all information entered. If everything is correct, click Next. If changes are needed, use the Go Back links in each section.

The screenshot shows the 'Review' step of the application process. At the top, there is a navigation bar with icons for 'Students', 'Assistance', 'Household', 'Review' (active), and 'Details'. Below the navigation bar, the title 'Review' is centered. A message states: 'Glance over your information and make sure everything looks good. If something needs to be changed you can select the edit option for each section. Otherwise, you can proceed to the next step.' Below this, there are three sections: 'Students', 'Assistance', and 'Household'. Each section has a 'Go Back' link. The 'Students' section shows 'Luna, Nina' with details: Hogg MS, Date of Birth: 06/15/2004, Income: None, and Foster/Homeless/Migrant/Runaway/Head Start: No. The 'Assistance' section shows a message: 'You have indicated that you did not receive any assistance from SNAP, TANF, FDIPIR or MEDICAID.' The 'Household' section shows 'Household Size: 2' and lists 'Luna, Nina (student)' with Income: None, and 'Hernandez, Cristina (applicant)' with Income: \$2,000.00 (Every 2 Weeks). At the bottom, there are 'Previous' and 'Next' buttons. The 'Next' button is highlighted with a red box.

### 14 Complete optional information.

The questions on this screen are optional. Answer them if you would like, then click Next. If you do not want to answer, leave them blank and click Next.

The screenshot shows the 'Optional Info' step of the application process. At the top, there is a navigation bar with icons for 'Students', 'Assistance', 'Household', 'Review', and 'Details' (active). Below the navigation bar, the title 'Optional Info' is centered. A message states: '(You do not have to complete this part to receive free or reduced priced meals.)'. Below this, there are three sections: 'Ethnicity', 'Racial Identity', and 'Consent to Release Meal Eligibility'. The 'Ethnicity' section has two radio buttons: 'Hispanic or Latino' and 'Not Hispanic or Latino'. The 'Racial Identity' section has five checkboxes: 'Asian', 'American Indian or Alaskan Native', 'Black or African American', 'Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander', and 'White'. The 'Consent to Release Meal Eligibility' section has a message: 'At this time, no optional programs exist that might request your information, so you can ignore this section.' Below this, there is an 'Information Sharing' section with a message: 'By checking this box, you voluntarily consent to let your child(ren)'s school share your child(ren)'s meal eligibility with any program(s) indicated (checked) above. You acknowledge that you have read and understood all information listed.' There is a checkbox for 'Information Sharing'. At the bottom, there are 'Previous' and 'Next' buttons. The 'Next' button is highlighted with a red box.

## 15

### Sign and submit the application.

If you have a Social Security Number, select Yes and enter the last four digits. If you do not have one, select No. Check the signature box, click Sign, then click Submit My Application.

< ★ Assistance    🏠 Household    ☰ Review    📄 Details    **✓ Submit** >

**✓ Submit**

**Cristina Hernandez**

Before submitting, please fill in a few details about yourself. This information will not be shared but helps the food service office contact you with the results of your application.

An adult household member must electronically sign the application. If the household member inform section is completed, the adult signing this application should have a social security number or mark the "I do not have a SSN" box.

Law requires us to capture the last 4 digits of your social security number for applying. If you do not have a social security number you may indicate that below.

Do you have an SSN?

☒ Yes ☐ No

Enter the last 4 digit of your Social Security Number

1234

Please select the applicant signing the application:

☒ **Sign**

Previous    **✓ Submit My Application**

## You are done!

You have successfully submitted your student's meal application. Please allow 10 business days for application processing.

For additional help, contact Student Eligibility & Accountability at [EligibilityInfo@HoustonISD.org](mailto:EligibilityInfo@HoustonISD.org) or call 713-491-5944.

*This institution is an equal opportunity provider.*