

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Free and Reduced-price School Meals in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP)

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. **South Windsor Public Schools partnered with Chartwells** offers healthy meals every school day. For school year (SY) 2023-24, South Windsor Public Schools has opted in to the **State Transition Assistance for Breakfast and Lunch Expenses (STABLE)** funding to offer breakfast free of charge for all students **at all schools no matter your income and lunch free to our Reduced-Priced qualifying students**. Pricing for students that do not qualify for free or reduced-price benefits are listed to the right. Depending on your family circumstances, your children may qualify for either free or reduced-price meals. This packet includes an application to apply for these school meal benefits and detailed instructions on how to complete the form.

**2023-2024 BREAKFAST
FREE TO ALL STUDENTS**
ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE &
HIGH SCHOOL

2023-2024 LUNCH PRICES
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL \$3.00
MIDDLE SCHOOL \$3.25/3.75
HIGH SCHOOL \$3.50/4.00

Note: Children receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) or Medicaid (HUSKY A) benefits *may* be directly certified and automatically eligible for free meals without applying for benefits. (Some children who receive Medicaid (HUSKY A) benefits **may** also be directly certified and automatically eligible for *reduced-price* meals.) Questions regarding SNAP/TFA/Medicaid and direct certification should be sent to the determining official, **Lisa Clayton at 860-474-1499**.

If you have received a Notice of Direct Certification for free or reduced-price meals, **do not** complete the application unless instructed to do so by the Food Service Department. Contact the Determining Official as listed on the letter if any children in your household are **not** listed on the **Notice of Direct Certification** you received, since free or reduced meal benefits are extended to all children in a household when directly certified.

Additionally, all school-aged children in income-eligible households can receive school meal benefits regardless of a child's immigration status and the district/school does not release information for immigration-related purposes in the usual course of operating the Child Nutrition Programs.

South Windsor Public Schools comply with the federal requirements for meal modifications for children with special dietary needs. The requirements for meal modifications are different for children with and without disabilities. For more information, please contact the **Food Service Director, Erica Dehay at 860-474-1440**.

The answers to the common questions below can help you with the application process.

1. Who can get free or reduced-price meals?

- All children in households receiving SNAP or TFA benefits are eligible for free meals. Note: *Some* students receiving Medicaid (HUSKY A) benefits are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.
- Foster children that are under the **legal** responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals. (Note: A foster child is categorically eligible for free meals and may be included as a member of the foster family if the foster family chooses to also apply for benefits for other children. Including children in foster care as household members may help other children in the household qualify for benefits. If non-foster children in a foster family are not eligible for free or reduced-price meal benefits, an eligible foster child will still receive free benefits.)
- Children who meet the definition of homeless or runaway are eligible for free meals.

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- Children may receive free or reduced-price meals if your household's income is within the limits of 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:

Federal Reduced Eligibility Income Chart (Effective July 1, 2023, to June 30, 2024)			
Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$26,973	\$2,248	\$519
2	\$36,482	\$3,041	\$702
3	\$45,991	\$3,833	\$885
4	\$55,500	\$4,625	\$1,068
5	\$65,009	\$5,418	\$1,251
6	\$74,518	\$6,210	\$1,434
7	\$84,027	\$7,003	\$1,616
8	\$93,536	\$7,795	\$1,799
Each additional family member	+\$9,509	+\$793	+ \$183

- How do I know if my children qualify as homeless 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 you have not been told your children will get free meals, please call or email Jessica Kuckel, Director of Special Services, 860-291-1240 or jkuckel@swindsor.k12.ct.us.
- 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. Return the completed application to **Lisa Clayton, Food Service Specialist, 161 Nevers Road, South Windsor, CT 06074**.
- Should I fill out an application if I received a letter this school year saying my children are already approved for free or reduced-price meals?** No, but please read the letter carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact **Lisa Clayton, Food Service Specialist, 860-474-1499** immediately.
- Can I apply online?** No.
- 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 up to 30 operating days into the new school year (or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever comes first). When the carryover period ends, unless you are notified that your children are directly certified or you submit an application that is approved, your children's meals must be claimed at the paid rate. Though encouraged to do so, the LEA is not required to send a reminder or a notice of expired eligibility.

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7. **I have not submitted an application within the past three years. Do I need to fill out a new one?** Yes. Your child's application is only good for that school year and for up to 30 operating days into the new school year (or until a new eligibility determination is made, whichever comes first). When the carryover period ends, unless you are notified that your children are directly certified or you submit an application that is approved, your children's meals must be claimed at the paid rate.
8. **I get WIC. Can my children get free meals?** Children in households participating in WIC **may** be eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Please send in an application.
9. **Will the information I give be checked?** Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.
10. **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 reduced-price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.
11. **What if I disagree with the district's decision about my application?** You should talk to the Determining Official, Lisa Clayton at 860-474-1499. If after speaking with the Determining Official you are not satisfied, you may ask for a hearing by calling or writing **Ms. Chris Chemerka, Director of Finance and Operations at 860-291-1269 or 1737 Main Street, South Windsor, CT 06074**
12. **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.
13. **What if my income is not always the same?** List the amount that you **normally** receive. For example, if you normally make \$1,000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only made \$900, put down that you made \$1,000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but not if you only work overtime sometimes. If you have had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income. It may be helpful to use tax documents to figure the annual amount earned if each year has a seasonal work flow schedule.
14. **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. When this happens, please write "0" in the field. However, if any income fields are left empty or blank, those will **also** be counted as zeroes. Please be careful when leaving income fields blank, as we will assume you **meant** to do so.
15. **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, these 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.
16. **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 to your application.
17. **My family needs more help. Are there other programs we might apply for?** To find out how to apply for SNAP benefits and to contact the Department of Social Services office in your town, contact United Way's free referral number **2-1-1** (free call, statewide). Additional information can found on Addendum C.

If you have other questions or need help, call **Lisa Clayton, Food Service Specialist, 860-474-1499**.

Sincerely,

Lisa Clayton
Food Service Specialist

Nondiscrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly.

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 (including gender identity and sexual orientation), 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, audiotope, 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

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