

August 10, 2006

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Dutchess County BOCES believes that one of the most important ways we can help our children perform better in their classrooms is to provide them with the nutrition necessary for the healthy growth of their minds and bodies. Therefore, we provide a breakfast and lunch in our school every day.

We invite all students to show their support for their school food service program through frequent participation. Students may buy lunch for \$1.60 and breakfast for \$1.00. Current milk prices are \$.40 per one half pint.

Children from households that meet Federal Income guidelines (see attached) are eligible for **free meals** or **reduced price meals**. **Reduced price meals** cost each eligible student \$.25 for breakfast and \$.25 for lunch. To apply for free or reduced price meals, submit a Direct Certification letter from the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance **OR** complete the enclosed application, sign it, and return it to Dutchess BOCES, 5 BOCES Rd, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601 as soon as possible. Please refer to the guidelines attached to this letter when completing the application. **We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information.**

Sincerely,

Doug Damiani
Principal of Salt Point Center

DD:mfg
cc: Linda Poleski

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Federal Income Guidelines

Some common questions regarding the National School Lunch Program:

1. **Do I need to fill out an application for each child?** No. Complete one application to apply for free or reduced price meals and include the names of all children in school and the name of the school (Part 1). Also include all children's names (as well as everyone in your household in Part #4 of the application). Do not fill out a separate application for each child.
2. **Who can get free meals?** Children in households getting Food Stamps or TANF and most foster children can get free meals regardless of your income. Also, your children can get free meals if your household income is within the free limits on the Federal Income Guidelines.
Each foster child must be listed on a separate application, with Part 2 completed and MUST include an adult signature.
3. **Can homeless, runaway and migrant children get free meals?** Please call (845) 486-4800 Ext. 281 to see if your child(ren) qualifies, if you have not been informed that they will get free meals.
4. **Who can get reduced price meals?** Your children can get low costs meals if your household income is within the reduced priced limited on the Federal Income Chart (see attached).
5. **Should I fill out an application if I received a letter this school year saying my children are approved for free or reduced priced meals?** Please read the letter you received carefully and follow the instructions. Call the school at (845) 486-4800 Ext. 281 if you have questions.
6. **I get WIC, can my child(ren) get free meals?** Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please fill out an application.
7. **Will the information I give be verified?** The school may ask you at any time during the school year to verify your eligibility. You will be notified in writing if you have been selected for verification. School officials may ask you to send proof showing that your child should receive free or reduced price meals at the time you applied.
8. **If I don't qualify now, may I apply later?** Yes. You may apply at any time during the school year if your household size goes up, income goes down, or if you start receiving Food Stamps, TANF or other benefits. If you lose your job, your children may be able to get free or reduced price meals.
9. **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 Kathy Hedges, School Lunch Program, Dutchess County BOCES, 5 BOCES Road, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601, (845) 486-4800 Ext. 281.
10. **May I apply if someone in my household is not a U.S. citizen?** Yes. You or your child(ren) do not have to be a U.S. citizen to qualify for free or reduced price meals.
11. **Who should I include as members of my household?** You must include all people living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives or friends). You must include yourself and all children who live with you.
12. **What if my income is not always the same?** List the amount of income you normally received. For example, if you normally get paid \$1000 per month, but you missed some work last month and only received \$900, put down that you get \$1000 per month. If you normally are paid overtime, include it, but don't include it if you only get paid overtime periodically.

How to Apply:

To get free or reduced price meals for your children you may submit a Direct Certification letter received from the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance or carefully complete the application attached and return it to the school. If you now receive food stamps, or Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) for any children, or participate in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), the application must include the children's names, the household food stamp number, ADC/TANF or FDPIR number and the signature of an adult household member. Contact your local Department of Social Services for your food stamp or TANF number or complete the income portion of the application. All children with the same case number may be listed on the same application. Separate applications are required for children with different case numbers. If you do not list a food stamp/ADC/TANF or FDRIP number for all the children for whom you are applying, the application must include the names of everyone in the household, the amount of income for each household member, and how often it is received and where it comes from. It must include the signature of an adult household member and that adult's social security number, or the word "**none**" if the adult does not have a social security number. An application that is not complete cannot be approved.

Income Chart: The attached chart lists income levels according to household size and income levels received either yearly, monthly or weekly. If your total household income is the same or less than the amounts on the Income Chart, your child(ren) may be eligible to receive free or reduce price meals.

Reporting Changes: The benefits that you are approved for at the time of application are effective for the entire school year. **You no longer need to report changes for an increase in income or decrease in household size, or if you no longer receive food stamps.**

Income Exclusions: The value of any childcare provided or arranged, or any amount received as payment for such childcare or reimbursement for costs incurred for such care under the Child Care Development (Block Grant) Fund should not be considered as income for this program.

Nondiscrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Meal Service to Children with Disabilities: Federal regulations require schools and institutions to serve meals at no extra charge to children with a disability that may restrict their diet. A student with a disability is defined in 7CFR Part 15b.3 of Federal regulations, as one who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities are defined to include functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. You must request the special meals from the school and provide the school with medical certification from a medical doctor. If you believe your child needs substitutions because of a disability, please get in touch with us for further information, as there is specific information that the medical certification must contain.

Confidentiality: The United States Department of Agriculture has approved the release of students names and eligibility status, without parent/guardian consent, to persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of federal education programs such as Title 1 and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which are United States Department of Education programs used to determine areas such as the allocation of funds to schools, to evaluate socioeconomic status of the school's attendance area, and to assess educational progress. Information may also be released to State health or State education programs administered by the State agency or local education agency, provided the State or local education agency administers the program, and Federal, State or local nutrition programs similar to the National School Lunch Program. Additionally, *all* information contained in the free and reduced price application may be released to persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of programs authorized under the National School Lunch Act (NSLA) or Child Nutrition Act (CAN); including the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, the Special Milk Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC); the Comptroller General of the United States for audit purposes, and Federal, State or local law enforcement officials investigating alleged violation of the programs under the NSLA or CAN.

The disclosure of eligibility information not specifically authorized by the NSLA requires a written consent statement from the parent/guardian.

We will let you know when your application is approved or denied.