

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SCHOOL MEALS

Children need healthy meals to learn. **Aldine ISD** offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast is offered at no cost to all students; lunch costs **\$2.25** for secondary schools and **\$2.00** for elementary levels. **Learning at Home students** will have curbside meals available for the same prices. **Students without money for lunch** will be allowed to purchase full meals up to a **\$20 debit limit**. Purchase of a la carte items will not be allowed if a student has a negative balance. Parents are strongly encouraged to monitor their student's meal account balance. Payments may be made in the school cafeteria or online at SchoolCafe. **Visit www.SchoolCafe.com to register. SchoolCafe allows parents to apply for free or reduced-price meal benefits, monitor account balances, or check menus.**

Your child(ren) may qualify for free meals or for reduced-price meals. Reduced price is **\$0.40** for lunch. This packet includes directions to apply for free or reduced-price meal benefits. Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

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

- **Special Assistance Program Participants** - All children in households receiving benefits from SNAP, FDPIR, or TANF, are eligible for free meals.
- **Foster** - Foster children that 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 programs are eligible for free meals.
- **Homeless, Runaway, and Migrant** - Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals. If you haven't been told about a child's status as homeless, runaway, or migrant or you feel a child may qualify for one of these programs, please contact **Efrain Uribe, School Homeless Liaison/Migrant Coordinator** at efuribe@aldineisd.org or call **(281) 985-6425**.
- **WIC** – Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals.
- **Income** - 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.

2. **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: **Efrain Uribe, School Homeless Liaison/Migrant Coordinator, 2520 WW Thorne Dr., Houston, TX 77073, (281) 985-6425**.

3. **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 few days of this school year, through **September 28, 2020**. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year. If you do not send in a new application that is approved or you have not been notified that your child is eligible, your child will be charged the full price for lunch.

4. **If I don't qualify now, may I apply later?** Yes. Apply at any time during the school year. A child 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.

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 bonuses 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 Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income. Any additional combat pay resulting from deployment is excluded from income.

7. **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.

8. **Will application information be checked?** Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the reported household income.

9. **My family needs more help. Are there other programs we might apply for?** To find out how to apply for other benefits, contact your local assistance office or **2-1-1**.

10. **Do I need to complete 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.

11. **Should I complete an application if I received a letter this school year saying my children are already approved for free meals?** No, but please read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact **Aldine Child Nutrition Services** at **(281) 985-6441** immediately.

If you have other questions or need help, call **Customer Accounts** at **(281) 985-6441**.

Non-Discrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly: The U.S Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.) If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish). This institution is an equal opportunity provider.