

Free/Reduced Meal Applications

How do I qualify for the Free and Reduced program?

Students whose family income is at or below 130 percent of the poverty income guidelines are eligible for free meals. Those with incomes between 130 and 185 percent are eligible for reduced price meals.

Do I have to fill out a Free/Reduced Meal Application for my student every year?

YES. You must fill out a new Free/Reduced Meal Application every school year and include all students on one household application. If your student received meal benefits at the end of the previous school year the benefits will carry over for the first 30 operating days of the new school year, or until a current applications completed and on file. Online meal applications are available at www.dickinsonisd.org and paper applications are available by request. Online meal applications have quicker processing. Until a current application is processed, the student must either bring money to purchase a school meal or bring a meal from home. All charges must be paid that were accrued prior to the household being approved for meal benefits.

EXCEPTION: If you receive a letter stating that your student(s) have been Direct Certified (DC), then you **do not have to complete** a new application.

What is Direct Certified (DC)?

DC students are students who are certified by the state of Texas and meet the requirement for low income.

When can I get a new application to fill out for my student(s)?

Applications for free and reduced price meals are available online through the "Meal App" link provided under "Quicklinks" on the bottom left side of the homepage at www.dickinsonisd.org. Online applications can be completed very easily using any computer with internet access. Public computers are available for use at the Food and Nutrition Building, all Schools, and ESC Building. Paper applications are also available by request.

Please fill out only 1 application per family. Applications can also be completed during online registration. Applications are accepted throughout the school year. If you have a change in income or household size, please call 281.229.6184.

If my child is withdrawn from school and returns at a later date, do I have to fill out another application?

NO. If your child is approved for free/reduced meals, it is good for the entire school year.

Can transfer students use the same application from another school district?

NO. USDA requires that a new application be completed when a student moves into a new district. 1 application per family

School Meals

What are the current prices for lunch and breakfast?

Elementary Schools (PK-4th grade):

Breakfast \$1.00

Lunch \$1.35

Middle School (5-6th grade):

Breakfast \$1.25

Lunch \$1.90

Jr. High and High Schools (7th-12th grade):

Breakfast \$1.25

Lunch \$2.00

Reduced Price Meals:

Breakfast \$0.30

Lunch \$0.40

What classifies a meal as reimbursable by the government?

The goal for the reimbursable meals program is to encourage your child to eat nutritious, well rounded meals.

A child must select a minimum of three items at breakfast, including a 1/2 cup of fruit. At lunch, a student must select 3 food groups, including 1/2 cup fruit or vegetable serving.

What is “offer versus serve”?

The student is “offered” all of the menu requirements, but the student chooses what he/she is “served” as long as a sufficient number (determined by USDA) of menu items or components are taken. This regulation was designed to reduce food waste.

Can a student substitute juice for milk?

NO. Per USDA, milk is considered an integral part of the reimbursable meal and can-not be substituted. The student may wish to purchase juice if available. Water is available in all cafeterias.

Are schools required to provide meals to students without money?

NO. If there is a financial need, parents are encouraged to complete an application to determine eligibility for free or reduced-priced meals.

What is the charging policy for the Dickinson School District?

[Click - District Charge Procedure](#)

Why is my child's meal more expensive when fewer items are purchased?

If a child chooses not to select at least three items from the required offerings they will be charged a la carte prices. A la carte items are not reimbursable.

Why did my child get this "Reminder Notice/Call-Out" to home?

As a service to the parents in our community the Dickinson Food and Nutrition Services Department provides a 'Reminder Notice/Call-Out' to students when the account balance is low or negative. This is intended to be a reminder to parents that it is time to place additional monies into your student's account with the school. We believe the notice is a convenient reminder for the parent.

You may also set up e-mail notices that will notify you about your child's low balance by going to the [Lunch Money Now](#) website.

Can school staff and/or parents require students to take certain menu items?

NO. Per USDA, staff members and other adults are prohibited from telling the student what menu items to take (including milk or entrée). They can inform the student of other possible meal components they need to complete a reimbursable tray. It must be the student's choice. Additionally, USDA requires that only the student (not staff, parents or siblings) eat food on their trays.

Can students be denied food as a disciplinary action?

NO. USDA policy prohibits the denial of meals as a disciplinary action against any student who is enrolled in a school participating in the Federal Meals Program.

If a class is being given a special meal, can the sponsoring group pay for the free students and tell the other students to bring money?

NO. This procedure would overtly identify a student's meal eligibility status. All students must be treated the same.

Why must meals served on school-sponsored field trips be monitored?

USDA requires that all meals claimed for reimbursement meet all regulations, even if on a field trip. Reimbursement is claimed for a specific meal served to a specific student. That is why we cannot just send "25 lunches for 25 students". Additionally, the teacher must insure that these meals be kept sanitary and at the correct temperature.

What is the district's policy on food brought from home?

The only food to be consumed by students during the school day on school premises shall be that provided by the school district's food and nutrition department, prepared under the supervision of the appropriate school personnel, prepared and supplied by the teacher for instructional purposes, or food brought to the school by the students for their own consumption. With the joint approval of the campus principal and the director of the Food and Nutrition Services Department, food for special student activities during the school day may be provided.

Why do faculty, staff and non-enrolled visitors pay more for meals than students?

According to federal regulations "breakfasts and lunches served to teachers, administrators, custodians and other adults must be priced so that the adult payment in combination with any other revenue is sufficient to cover the overall cost of the lunch, including the value of any USDA entitlement and bonus donated foods used to prepare the meal." The Food and Nutrition Department receives reimbursement for meals served to children. The value of this reimbursement and donated commodities must not be used to subsidize adult meals.

Can district staff and/or parents purchase or take leftover food home?

NO. The breakfast and lunch programs are designed and funded to serve children in a designated location, usually the cafeteria. No food, not even purchased food, is to be taken from the premises.

Student Meal Account

How can I make deposits to my child's account?

Prepaying for meals and/or a la carte items is an efficient way to pay for your student's school meals. If paying by check, write the student name(s) and ID # on the "memo" section of the check. If paying by cash, enclose a piece of paper with the student name(s) and ID # with the money in an envelope. Deposits on an account can be made at any time either before school or during lunch, but to help serve you better, we would encourage you to make deposits in the mornings before school. Any amount may be deposited on any day. The cashier will remind the student when his/her account balance is getting low. Payments may also be made online at: [LUNCH MONEY NOW](#)

REMINDER - Child Nutrition Services does not accept checks three weeks before school is out each year. If you have questions, please contact us at 281-229-6012

What happens if someone uses my child's account?

The District student accounting system randomly generates the ID numbers that are distributed to your child, making it difficult for someone to gain access to the number.

If the number is used by someone other than the legitimate holder, the register will notify the cashier that the number has been used. The cafeteria manager will take steps to rectify this situation. Your child's account will not be charged for unauthorized usage.

A parent can always ask for a detailed report on available meal money and meal transactions in the student's account. To request this information, please call the cafeteria manager. You may also check your student's account balance and/or meal transactions online at: [LUNCH MONEY NOW](#)

Please remember that the student meal ID number issued belongs to your son or daughter. This meal ID number is confidential and should not be shared with other students. When your student keys in his/her ID number, your student's name will also appear on the screen. It would be helpful if you would discuss with your child that their ID number needs to be kept confidential.

Can I limit what my child purchases from his/her account?

Your child's account can be blocked from a la carte purchases at the parent's request. A message can be put on a student's account with any restrictions the parent requests. The "message" will remain in effect as long as your child attends school in the district unless a parent requests it to be removed in writing.

What happens to money left in my child's account at the end of the school year?

If your child has money left in his/her account at the end of a school year the money will be available on the first day of school the following year. This is true whether the child remains in the same school or moves to another Dickinson ISD school. All students leaving the district must check with the Food and Nutrition Department to pay any outstanding charges.

How do I get a refund of money in my child's account?

If you would like a refund of money in your child's account you must contact the manager at your child's school, or the FNS Office to fill out a request for a refund. Refunds will be sent only to the legal guardian at their address. Cash refunds of \$10.00 or less are permitted at the school and all refunds greater than \$10.00 are handled through the Food and Nutrition Services office. [Click here to print a Request for Refund Form.](#)

Requests can be mailed to:
Dickinson Food and Nutrition Services
Dickinson ISD
Attn: Refunds
P.O. Drawer Z, Dickinson, Texas 77539
Requests may also be faxed to 281-229-6013 or email to dsalinas@dickinsonisd.org

What type of cash register system does the food service department use?

Dickinson ISD Food & Nutrition Services utilize a computerized cash register system. This system allows us to provide better service to both students and parents, as well as account for all meals served at this site. Each student is assigned a personal identification number (student ID #) on the first day of school or when enrolled in the school. During mealtime, students will key in their meal ID number on a keypad or a scan card will be used with their ID. The current money balance in the student's meal account will be shown on the register or Point of Sale (POS) screen. If an account has enough money, the transaction will be processed and the amount of the meal will be deducted from the student's balance. If there is not enough money in the elementary student account, the student's account will be debited for the meal, and the student will receive a notice to take home. All Junior High and High School students are not allowed to charge meals. Students receiving free meals will automatically have an account balance of one lunch per day. A la carte items may be purchased from the account or paid for with cash.

Will my child have the same ID while enrolled in DISD?

Yes. Personal Identification numbers are issued on a per district basis. The ID your child is issued will be valid while attending any school in the district.

Nutrition/Wellness

What steps should I take if my child has a food allergy?

1. Contact the nurse at your child's school.
2. Give the nurse a doctor's note with your child's diagnosis. [Click here for the Allergy Form](#) to be completed by your physician.
3. Give your child's cafeteria manager a copy of the doctor's note. The cafeteria manager will send it in to the child nutrition office.
4. Parents can contact the Nutrition Educator at lwilley@dickinsonisd.org with any questions or concerns about menu items.

What is the Dickinson ISD Wellness program?

In Dickinson ISD we are committed to providing means for better health, and overall Wellness of Dickinson ISD employees. On our Wellness Web Page you will find helpful articles for weight loss tips, workout tips, and other useful links that will help promote healthy living and a healthy lifestyle. If you have any questions please call Lacy Willey, lwilley@dickinsonisd.org for more information about healthy activities going on.