



## POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS Frequently Asked Questions



**Q1: Where can I get a free and reduced price application for meal benefits?**

**A1:** Meal benefit applications are available at the school office or you may [download a copy here](#) (PDF format).

**Q2: Can I fax my application to the Food and Nutrition Department?**

**A2:** **No.** An official application must contain the **original signature** of the applicant.

**Q3: Where do I send my completed application?**

**A3:** Mail completed applications to: Food and Nutrition Department, 12225 Kirkham Road, Suite 100, Poway, CA 92064-8847, or you can drop it off at your youngest child's school. You can also personally deliver your application to the Food and Nutrition office located in the Poway Industrial Center, at 12225 Kirkham Road, Suite 100, Poway, CA 92064.

**Q4: Who can get free or reduced price meals?**

**A4:** Children receiving SNAP (formerly the Food Stamp Program), CalWORKs, KinGAP, or FDPIR. You are also eligible for meal benefits if your household income is within the limits on the Federal Income Chart. A foster child or children living in a group home are also eligible.

**Q5: How long does it take to process an application?**

**A5:** Ten school days after receipt in the Food and Nutrition Department. However, it may take longer at the start of school due to high volume.

**Q6: Will I need to pay for my child's meals until the application is processed?**

**A6:** Yes, meal benefits start only after the **approval date** of your application.

**Q7: How will I know if my child qualifies for free or reduced price meals?**

**A7:** The Food and Nutrition Department notifies all families who submit an application of their child's status by mail.

**Q8: Can I put my child's nickname on the application?**

**A8:** **No.** Please write your child's full name exactly as used to register him or her in school.

**Q9: Who should I include on the application as members of my household?**

**A9:** You must include every person living in your house, related or not. This includes: yourself, your spouse, all children, grandparents, relatives, friends, babies, etc.

**Q10: Do I have to complete a free/reduced application each year?**

**A10:** **Yes.** You must complete a new complete application each school year for approval.

**Q11: My child was on the lunch program last year. Will her free status carry over to this year?**

**A11:** It will carry over only for the first 30 school days. We must have a new application each school year.

**Q12: Do pre-kindergarten students automatically qualify for free/reduced meals?**

**A12:** **No.** All students must complete a Free and Reduced Price Meal application each year.



## POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS Frequently Asked Questions (Continued)



**Q13: Do I need to fill out a separate application for each child?**

**A13: No.** Use one application form for all elementary, middle, and high school students in your household (including foster children).

**Q14: Our income this year is identical to last year, when my children were free. Why are they reduced this year?**

**A14:** This is very common. The Federal Income Guidelines change every year which may change your eligibility status.

**Q15: What can I do if I get laid off from work and have no income?**

**A15:** Complete a meal benefit application and indicate that you receive no income. We will process your application as zero income and approve it for the current school year.

**Q16: Do foster children qualify for free meals?**

**A16: Yes.** Foster children qualify for free meals. List all children, including foster children, on the same application form and include all income received by the foster children.

**Q17: Why was my application for meal benefits denied?**

**A17:** Your income may be high. Also, you may have omitted or incorrectly completed important information on the application form.

**Q18: If I do not qualify for free or reduced price meals now, may I apply later?**

**A18: Yes.** You may apply at any time during the school year if your household size or income changes, or if you start receiving SNAP, CalWORKs, KinGAP, or FDPIR.

**Q19: Can my children receive free meals if they qualified for free meals in another district?**

**A19: No.** You must first complete a meal benefit application for Poway Unified School District.

**Q20: How can my child owe money if he or she is authorized free meals?**

**A20:** Your child may have purchased an a la carte item (i.e., juice) that is not free. Also, your child may have consumed meals before your application was officially approved. Parents are liable for all food items consumed by their children in both cases.

**Q21: Can homeless, runaway, and migrant children get free meals?**

**A21: Yes.** Please contact Alternative Programs at 748-0010 ext. 2530 to see if your children meet the criteria for homeless, runaway, and migrant.

**Q22: Who has permission to see my application for free and reduced price meals?**

**A22:** The authorizing official and specific Board approved school district officials.

**Q23: Once approved for meal benefits, what is the process for my child to receive breakfast/lunch at the school site?**

**A23:** Please inform your child to go to the school nutrition center and enter his or her six (6) digit Personal Identification Number (PIN) on the keypad next to the cashier station. **Note:** Secondary school students must select a school lunch. **A La Carte items are at the full price for all students.**