

POLICY STATEMENT FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS

The Platte County School District #2, Guernsey-Sunrise Schools has agreed to participate in the National School Lunch Program and accepts responsibility for providing free and reduced price meals to eligible children in the schools under its jurisdiction.

The School Food Authority assures the Wyoming State Department of Education that the school system will uniformly implement the following policies to administer the program in schools under its jurisdiction. In fulfilling these responsibilities the School Food Authority agrees to the following provisions:

A. Free Meals: Serve meals to children from households whose income is at or below the free limit of the Income Eligibility guidelines represented on Attachment A; or to children from food stamp households that provide a case number.

B. Reduced Price Meals: Serve meals at a reduced price to children from households whose income is at or below the reduced price limit of the Income Eligibility Guidelines listed in Attachment A.

C. Limit Reduced Price Costs: Set reduced price charges for lunch at or below the maximum reduced price allowed by regulations and below the full price of the lunch.

D. Equal Treatment: Ensure no physical segregation of, nor any other discrimination against, any child because of his/her inability to pay the full price of the meal or milk. The names of the children eligible to receive free or reduced price meals or free milk shall not be published posted, or announced in any manner, and there shall be no overt identification of any such children by use of special tokens, tickets or any other means. Further assurance is given that children eligible for free or reduced price meals or free milk shall not be required to:

1. Work for their meals or milk;
2. Use a separate lunchroom or milk service area;
3. Go through a separate serving line;
4. Enter the lunchroom through a separate entrance;
5. Eat meals or drink milk at a different time;
6. Eat a meal different from the one sold to children paying the full price or drink milk different from that sold to children paying the full price.

E. Non-discrimination: Operate the school nutrition program so that no child shall be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, or disability.

F. Verification: Verify eligibility of applicant households in accordance with program regulations and annually maintain records as follow: (1) A summary of the verification efforts; (2) The total number of applications on file by October 31; and (3) The

percentage or number of applications verified. Compliance with these requirements will be monitored by the State Agency as part of its supervisory assistance monitoring and verification efforts.

G. Appeal Process: Establish and use a fair hearing procedure under which: A household can appeal a decision made by the School Food Authority with respect to the household's application for benefits and/or any subsequent reduction or termination of benefits. During the appeal and hearing, the child who was determined to be eligible based on the face of the application submitted will continue to receive free or reduced price meals or free milk. Prior to initiating the hearing procedure, the school official, the parent(s) or guardian may request a conference to provide an opportunity for the parent(s)/guardian and school official(s) to discuss the situation, present information, obtain an explanation of data submitted in the application and the decisions rendered. Such a conference shall not in any way prejudice or diminish the right to a fair hearing.

The designated hearing official is the Superintendent of Schools, Box 189, Guernsey, Wyoming 82214, who shall ensure that the hearing procedure provides the following for both the household and the School Food Authority:

1. A publicity announced, simple method for making an oral or written request for a hearing.
2. An opportunity to be assisted or represented by an attorney or other person.
3. An opportunity to examine, prior to and during the hearing, the documents and records presented to support the decision under appeal.
4. Reasonable promptness and convenience in scheduling a hearing, and adequate notice as to its time and place.
5. An opportunity to present oral or documentary evidence and arguments supporting a position without undue interference.
6. An opportunity to question or refute any testimony or other evidence and to confront and cross examine any adverse witness(es).
7. That the hearing be conducted and the decision be made by an official who did not participate in the decision under appeal or any previous conference.
8. That the decision of the hearing official be based on the oral and documentary evidence presented at the hearing and entered into the hearing record.
9. That the parties concerned and any designated representative thereof be notified in writing of the decision.

10. That for each hearing a written record be prepared, including the decision under appeal, any documentary evidence and a summary of any oral testimony presented at the hearing, the decision of the hearing official and the reasons therefore, and a copy of the notification to the parties concerned of the hearing official's decision.
11. That such written record must be retained for a period of three years after the close of the school year to which they pertain. These records must be made available for examination by the parties concerned or their designees at any reasonable time and place during such period.

H. Eligibility Officials: Designate the Food Services Coordinator, Box 189, Guernsey, Wyoming 82214 to review applications and make determinations of eligibility. Such official will use the criteria outlined in this policy to determine which individual children are eligible for free and reduced price meals.

Note: The hearing official must be someone not involved in the original eligibility determination. It is suggested that he/she hold a position at a higher administrative level than that of the determining official.

I. Press Release: Submit a public/press release containing both the free and reduced price eligibility guidelines and other information contained in the parent letter, to the local news media, local unemployment offices and major employers contemplating or experiencing large layoffs.

J. Application Forms and Process: Develop and distribute to each child's parents or guardian a letter and an application form for free and reduced price meals or where appropriate, free milk. These forms shall be distributed at or about the beginning of each school year or whenever there is a change in eligibility criteria. The letter to parents with the meal application attachment shall have only the income eligibility guidelines for reduced price meals with an explanation that households with incomes at or below the reduced price guidelines may be eligible for either free or reduced price meals. The letter to parents with the free milk application form shall list the income eligibility guideline for free milk.

Interested parents or guardians are responsible for filling out the application and returning it to the school for review. Such applications and documentation of eligibility determinations made will be maintained for a period of three years following the end of the school year to which they pertain.

Applications may be filed at any time during the year. Parents or guardians enrolling a child in a school for the first time shall be supplied with appropriate meal or milk application materials regardless of the time of year the child is registered. If a child transfers from one school to another under the jurisdiction of the same School Food Authority, his/her eligibility for free or reduced price meals, or if offered, free milk, will be transferred to and honored by the receiving school.

All children from an eligible household will receive the same benefits. Parents or guardians will be promptly notified of the acceptance or denial of their applications (s). Children will be served meals or milk immediately upon the establishment of their eligibility.

It is recognized that in certain cases foster children are also eligible for these benefits. If a household has foster children living with them and wishes to apply for such meals or milk for these children, the household will be instructed to contact the school.

When an application is denied, parents or guardians will be provided written notification which shall include: (1) The reason for the denial of benefits, e.g., income in excess of allowable limits or incomplete application; (2) Notification of the right to appeal; (3) Instructions on how to appeal; and (4) A statement reminding parents that they may reapply for free and reduced price benefits or free milk at any time during the school year. The reasons for ineligibility shall be properly documented and retained on file at the School Food Authority level.

K. Collection and Accountability: Establish a procedure to collect money from children who pay for their meals and milk and to account for the number of free, reduced price and full price meals served or the number of half-pints of free and full price milk served. The procedure described in Attachment E will be used so that no child in the school will be aware of such procedure or the identity of the children receiving free or reduced price meals or free milk.

I. Revisions to Policies: Submit to the Wyoming State Department of Education, Cheyenne, Wyoming any revisions to the administrative procedures outlined above before implementation. Such changes will be effective only upon approval. All changes in eligibility criteria must be publicly announced in the same manner used at the beginning of the school year.

The following are considered addenda to this policy:

- Income Eligibility Guidelines for Free and Reduced Price Meals or Free Milk
- Letter to parents and Application Form for Free and Reduce Price Meals or Free Milk
- Notification letter to Parents applying for either Free and Reduced Price Meals or Free Milk
- Public/Press Release
- Collection Procedures

Adopted: 03/10/86

Revised: 11/14/94

Revised: 01/12/98