

## School Meals Information for School Year 2022-2023

On June 30, 2022, the law authorizing free school meals for all enrolled students expires. Families will need to complete an application for free and reduced-price meals, beginning as early as July 1<sup>st</sup>. The military exchanges, AAFES, NEXCOM and MCCS, will publish information on the procedures for applying for free and reduced-price meals no later than July 1<sup>st</sup>. Please note that families must reapply each year for free and reduced-price meal eligibility, can apply anytime during the school year, but must reapply beginning July 1<sup>st</sup> of every year.

### **FAQ**

#### **Why isn't the free meal waiver continuing next year?**

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA), Public Law 116-127, authorized free school meals for all students and other temporary changes. The law expires on June 30, 2022. This authorization was in response to the sudden widespread and lengthy unemployment of many households and loss of in-school learning that started at the beginning of the pandemic. Without access to the school breakfast and lunch programs that many of our Nation's children depend on, the health of our Nation's children was at risk. Therefore, Congress authorized waivers to the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program that provided free student meals.

#### **What happens now that all students no longer have free meals next school year?**

Beginning as early as July 1<sup>st</sup> of each school year, families can complete an application for free and reduced-price meals. Families who do not qualify or do not apply will pay the full price amount. Eligibility status for free and reduced-price meals is for the entire school year and only one school year. Families must reapply every school year as early as July 1<sup>st</sup> (July 15<sup>th</sup> for AAFES).

#### **How do I know if I qualify for free and reduced-price meals?**

Eligibility for free and reduced-price meals is based on household size and income. When determining household income, each spouse's income is included. However, military pay for the overseas cost of living adjustment, overseas housing allowance, hazardous duty pay and combat pay is EXCLUDED from total income. Overseas families, excluding Guam and Puerto Rico, use the Alaska Income Eligibility Rate. The income eligibility rates will not be published by USDA until mid-late June. A foster child who is the legal responsibility of the courts is eligible to receive free meals regardless of your income. Children enrolled in Sure Start automatically qualifies for free school meals.

#### **How do I obtain a web-based lunch account for my child?**

For all sites, you will need your student ID number, exact spelling of the student name used upon registration and an email address. The student ID number and exact spelling of name used upon registration is available from your school.

For AAFES school meals, you must visit your local Exchange Customer Service to set up a meal account for each student. A 6-digit PIN number will be assigned at this time. Returning students who already have a meal account and PIN can skip this step. Once your student's account has been created, you may add money to his/her account at the local Exchange Customer Service or you may set up an account and add funds online through MyPaymentsPlus (MPP).

For NEXCOM, Applications are made through an online application at <https://family.titank12.com>. For families participating in the NEXCOM Student Meal Program, your district name is 'DoDEA - Navy Exchange (Alexandria, Virginia).'

### **How do I apply for Free and Reduced-Price Meals?**

Free and Reduced-Price Meal Applications are made through an online application. In accordance with USDA regulations, applications are available no earlier than July 1st (July 15<sup>th</sup> for AAFES) for the upcoming school year. You must have your child's DoDEA student ID number, the exact spelling of the name used on the school enrollment application and a correct email address. An email is required to receive the status confirmation email.

For AAFES: Applications are made through an online application at <https://freeandreducedapps.aafes.com>. Applications are available on July 15th and you must have your student's DoDEA student ID number, the exact spelling of the name used on the school enrollment application and a correct email address. An email is required to receive the status confirmation email.

For NEXCOM: Applications are available on its website.

### **What is the cost of a meal?**

Reduced-price breakfast - \$0.30

Reduced-price lunch - \$0.40

Full price breakfast – TBD

Full price lunch – TBD

All meals must be paid for in advance or at the time of sale. Households should prepare a budget to ensure they have funds to pay for meals. A best practice is to fund your child's meal account every pay day with enough funds to pay for meals until the next pay day.

### **My student is currently enrolled in the DoDEA Virtual School (DVS). Are DVS students allowed to participate in the SMP?**

Yes, all students enrolled in DoDEA schools participating in the USDA SMP are eligible to participate. Parents/sponsors should establish a SMP account with AAFES/NEX/MCCS and then inquire with their local DoDEA schools regarding specific procedures.

### **I home school my students. Are we eligible for the Student Meal Program?**

If home school students have a DoDEA student ID number and are receiving auxiliary services or enrolled in at least one course, they are eligible to participate in the student meal program.

### **What do I do if my child forgets lunch or lunch money?**

In the spirit of an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, the best practice is to include the cost of school meals in your budget and then every pay day fund the account through the next pay day. You can set up low balance reminders in the on-line account or set up automatic payments to avoid this issue.

In the rare event that a child has no lunch meal or money to pay for a meal, the school kitchen members will make special arrangements to feed your child; however, this meal must be paid for by the family. Tax dollars and school meals revenue cannot be used to pay this debt owed by the family.

### **Where would I find the monthly breakfast or lunch menus for my student's school?**

Please visit your Exchange Student Meal Program website

[AAFES Student Meal Program](#)

[NEXCOM Student Meal Program](#)

MCCS Student Meal Program

\*\* Every school does not provide the School Breakfast Program. Please contact your school administration for more information.