

October 2020

Dear Winchendon Public Schools, Students, Parents, and School Community:

*******AUTOMATED FREE AND REDUCED APPLICATION – ONLINE *******

This year we will be offering an ONLINE Free and Reduced Application. The USDA has opened up the Lunch and Breakfast Program as free for all, until 6/31/21.

Applications need to be filed as usual, unless you have received a direct certification letter. If you require a paper application to be sent home, please call Marilyn at 978-616-1459 and I will put one in the mail. The automated application will be found on the Winchendon Public Schools website, www.winchendonk12.org. Parents section and then Chartwell's, the link is <https://www.myschoolapps.com/Application>

**USDA- Due to Covid19 the 2020-2021 School year is FREE for all students –
The State is still requesting that applications be filled out for this school year.**

Nutrislice

An interactive online website and mobile app. for school menu and nutrition information! Parents and students can view our school breakfast and lunch menus at winchendonk12.nutrislice.com. Nutrislice allows users to view current menus, filter for allergies, and see nutrition information including Carb counts!

Breakfast

Start your day right with breakfast! Students who eat breakfast have more energy throughout the day, pay more attention in class, reduce their stress levels, and change their overall attitude! All students on the free & reduced lunch program are eligible to receive a free or reduced (\$0.30) priced breakfast. Paid breakfast is \$1.50.

Allergies are nothing to sneeze about!

If your child has a food allergy and may need menu modification please contact Roman Ruzbasan, the director of dining services so that we can work with you, your child, and the school's nurse to start enjoying school lunch with us!

District Charge Policy regarding School Meals:

Parents/guardians must keep a positive balance in their child's account at all times as no "charging" is allowed. Parents/guardians may sign up for the online payment system at www.myschoolbucks.com. This system can be used to set-up automatic low-balance notifications and allow parents to pre-pay for meals. Please, reference the local charge policy on the Winchendon Public Schools website.

Free & Reduced Priced Meals

Free & Reduced priced meal applications are distributed at the school level. All students will receive new paper applications on their return to school. Please feel free to contact us at any time

rruzbasan@winchendonk12.org or **978-616-1477**

Sincerely, Roman Ruzbasan, Dining Services Director Winchendon Public Schools, Chartwells School Dining Services

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



WINCHENDON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"Working Together"

Joan Landers

Superintendent of Schools

jlanders@winchendonk12.org



October 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. **Winchendon Public Schools** offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs **\$1.50**; lunch costs **\$3.00**. **Your children may qualify for free meals or reduced-price meals.** The reduced price is **\$0.30** for breakfast and **\$0.40** for lunch. This packet includes an application for free or reduced-price meal benefits and a set of detailed instructions. Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

Frequently Asked Questions

WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE MEALS?

- All children in households receiving benefits from **MA SNAP, MA TAFDC, FDPIR, or specific categories of Medicaid** are eligible for free meals.
- **Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.**
- **Children participating in their school's Head Start program are eligible for free meals.**
- Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals.
- 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.

FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART For School Year 2020-2021			
Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$23,606	\$1,968	\$454
2	\$31,894	\$2,658	\$614
3	\$40,182	\$3,349	\$773
4	\$48,470	\$4,040	\$933
5	\$56,758	\$4,730	\$1,092
6	\$65,046	\$5,421	\$1,251
7	\$73,334	\$6,112	\$1,411
8	\$81,662	\$6,802	\$1,570
Each additional person:	+8,288	+691	+160

HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILDREN QUALIFY AS HOMELESS, MIGRANT, OR RUNAWAY?

Do the members of your household lack a permanent address? Are you staying together in a shelter, hotel, or another temporary housing arrangement? Does your family relocate on a seasonal basis? Are any children living with you who have chosen to leave their prior family or household? If you believe children in your household meet these descriptions and haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call or e-mail **Jane Greenleaf, liaison, 978-616-5212, jgreenleaf@winchendonk12.org**.

DO I NEED TO FILL OUT 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 the required information. Return the completed application to **Marilyn Murphy, 175 Grove Street, Winchendon, Ma. 01475, 978-616-1459, mmurphy@winchendonk12.org**.

SHOULD I FILL OUT 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 **Marilyn Murphy, 175 Grove Street, 978-616-1459, mmurphy@winchendonk12.org**, immediately.

CAN I APPLY ONLINE?

Yes! You are encouraged to complete an online application instead of a paper application if you are able. The online application has the same requirements and will ask you for the same information as the paper application. Visit **winchendonk12.org** to begin or to learn more about the online application process. Contact **Marilyn Murphy, 175 Grove Street, 978-616-1459, mmurphy@winchendonk12.org** if you have any questions about the online application.

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 the first few days of this school year. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year.

I GET WIC. CAN MY CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS?

Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced-price meals. Please send in a completed application.

WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED?

Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.

IF I DON'T QUALIFY NOW, MAY I APPLY LATER?

Yes, you may apply at any time during the school year. For example, children 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.

WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE SCHOOL'S DECISION ABOUT MY APPLICATION?

You should contact school officials. You also may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to **Marilyn Murphy, 175 Grove Street, Winchendon, Ma. 978-616-1459, mmurphy@winchendonk12.org**.

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.

WHAT IF MY INCOME IS NOT ALWAYS THE SAME?

List the amount that you normally receive. For example, if you normally make \$1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only made \$900, put down that you made \$1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but do not include it if you only work overtime sometimes. If you have lost a job or had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income.

WHAT IF SOME HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS HAVE NO INCOME TO REPORT?

Household members may not receive some types of income we ask you to report on the application or may not receive income at all. Whenever this happens, please write a 0 in the field. However, if any income fields are left empty or blank, those will also be counted as zeroes. Please be careful when leaving income fields blank, as we will assume you meant to do so.

WE ARE IN THE MILITARY. DO WE REPORT OUR INCOME DIFFERENTLY?

Your basic pay and cash bonuses must be reported as income. If you get any cash value allowances for off-base housing, food, or clothing, or receive Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance payments, it must also be included as income. However, if your 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 also excluded from income.

WHAT IF THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SPACE ON THE APPLICATION FOR MY FAMILY?

List any additional household members on a separate piece of paper and attach it to your application. Contact **Marilyn Murphy, 175 Grove St. Winchendon, Ma. 01475, 978-616-1459, mmurphy@winchendonk12.org** to receive a second application.

MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR?

To find out how to apply for **MA SNAP** or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call **the MA SNAP Hotline at 1-866-950-3663**.

If you have other questions or need help, call **978-616-1459**.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Murphy
Food Services Secretary

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires the information on this application. You do not have to give the information, but if you do not submit all the needed information, we cannot approve your child for free or reduced-price meals. You must include the last four digits of the social security number of the primary wage earner or other adult household members who will sign the application. The social security number is not required when you apply on behalf of a foster child or you list a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program or Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) case number or other FDPIR identifier for your child or when you indicate that the adult household member signing the application does not have a social security number. We will use your information to determine if your child is eligible for free or reduced-price meals, and administration and enforcement of the lunch and breakfast programs.

We may share your eligibility information with education, health, and nutrition programs to help them evaluate, fund, or determine benefits for their programs, auditors for program reviews, and law enforcement officials to help them look into violations of program rules.

Non-Discrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly. “In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.