

## Letter to Household

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Ellington Public Schools, in partnership with Whitsons Culinary Group offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs \$2.00-2.50; lunch costs \$2.75-3.75. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals. 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.

PLEASE NOTE - All children in households receiving benefits from Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) or Medicaid (HUSKY), may be directly certified and automatically eligible for free meals without applying for benefits. (Some children who receive Medicaid (HUSKY) benefits may also be directly certified and automatically eligible for reduced-price meals.) Questions regarding SNAP/TFA/Medicaid and direct certification should be sent to the Determining Official, [foodservice@ellingtonschools.net](mailto:foodservice@ellingtonschools.net) or 860-896-2339 x301.

If you have received a NOTICE OF DIRECT CERTIFICATION for free or reduced-priced meals, DO NOT complete the application unless instructed to do so by the district. Please contact the Determining Official by emailing [foodservice@ellingtonschools.net](mailto:foodservice@ellingtonschools.net) or calling 860-896-2339 x 301 if any children in your household are NOT listed on the Notice of Direct Certification letter you received, since free or reduced meal benefits are extended to all children in a household when directly certified.

Additionally, all school-aged children in income-eligible households can receive school meal benefits regardless of a child's immigration status and the district/school does not release information for immigration-related purposes in the usual course of operating the Child Nutrition Programs.

The Ellington Public School district, in partnership with Whitsons Culinary Group complies with the federal requirements for meal modifications for children with special dietary needs. The requirements for meal modifications are different for children with and without disabilities. For more information, please contact the Food Service Director, Lindsay Steller at 860-896-2339 x 301 or [lsteller@ellingtonschools.net](mailto:lsteller@ellingtonschools.net)

Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

### 1) WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE MEALS?

All children in households receiving SNAP or TFA benefits are eligible for free meals. NOTE: Some students receiving Medicaid (HUSKY) benefits are eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

- Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals. NOTE: A foster child is categorically eligible for free meals and may be included as a member of the foster family if the foster family chooses to also apply for the benefits for other children. Including children in foster care as household members may help other children in the household qualify for benefits. If non-foster children in a foster family are not eligible for free or reduced meal benefits, an eligible foster child will still receive free benefits).
- 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 of 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 the chart below.

2. 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 other 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 Brian Greenleaf, 860-896-2300, [bgreenleaf@ellingtonschools.net](mailto:bgreenleaf@ellingtonschools.net).

3. 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 required information. Return the completed application to the Determining Official at 46 Middle Butcher Rd. Ellington, CT 06029, [foodservice@ellingtonschools.net](mailto:foodservice@ellingtonschools.net), 860-896-2339 x 301.

4. 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 the Determining Official at 46 Middle Butcher Rd. Ellington, CT 06029, [foodservice@ellingtonschools.net](mailto:foodservice@ellingtonschools.net), 860-896-2339 x301 immediately.

5. **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 [ellingtonpublicschools.org/parents/food](http://ellingtonpublicschools.org/parents/food) to learn more about the online application process. Contact the Determining Official at 46 Middle Butcher Rd. Ellington, CT 06029, [foodservice@ellingtonschools.net](mailto:foodservice@ellingtonschools.net), 860-896-2339 x301 if you have any questions about the online application.
6. **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 for 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.
7. **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 an application.
8. **WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED?** Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.
9. **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.
10. **WHAT IF I DISAGREE WITH THE SCHOOL'S DECISION ABOUT MY APPLICATION?** You should talk to school officials. You also may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to: Brian Greenleaf at 47 Main St. Ellington, CT 06029, [bgreenleaf@ellingtonschools.net](mailto:bgreenleaf@ellingtonschools.net), 860-896-2300.
11. **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.
12. **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.
13. **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.
14. **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.
15. **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 the Determining Official at 46 Middle Butcher Rd. Ellington, CT 06029, [foodservice@ellingtonschools.net](mailto:foodservice@ellingtonschools.net), 860-896-2339 x301 to receive a second application.
16. **MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR?** To find out how to apply for SNAP benefits or other assistance benefits and to contact the Department of Social Services office in your town, contact United Way's free referral number 2-1-1 (free call, statewide).

If you have other questions or need help, call 860-896-2339 x 301.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Steller, RD  
Ellington Food Service Director  
Whitsons Culinary Group  
[lsteller@ellingtonschools.net](mailto:lsteller@ellingtonschools.net)

**Your child(ren) 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 20-21**

Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Twice a Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	\$23606.00	\$1968.00	\$984.00	\$908.00	\$454.00
2	\$31894.00	\$2658.00	\$1329.00	\$1227.00	\$614.00
3	\$40182.00	\$3349.00	\$1675.00	\$1546.00	\$773.00
4	\$48470.00	\$4040.00	\$2020.00	\$1865.00	\$933.00
5	\$56758.00	\$4730.00	\$2365.00	\$2183.00	\$1092.00
6	\$65046.00	\$5421.00	\$2711.00	\$2502.00	\$1251.00
7	\$73334.00	\$6112.00	\$3056.00	\$2821.00	\$1411.00
8	\$81622.00	\$6802.00	\$3401.00	\$3140.00	\$1570.00
Each additional person	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

**Free Federal Eligibility Income Chart for School Year 20-21**

Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Twice a Month	Every Two Weeks	Weekly
1	\$16588.00	\$1383.00	\$692.00	\$638.00	\$319.00
2	\$22412.00	\$1868.00	\$934.00	\$862.00	\$431.00
3	\$28236.00	\$2353.00	\$1177.00	\$1086.00	\$543.00
4	\$34060.00	\$2839.00	\$1420.00	\$1310.00	\$655.00
5	\$39884.00	\$3324.00	\$1662.00	\$1534.00	\$767.00
6	\$45708.00	\$3809.00	\$1905.00	\$1758.00	\$879.00
7	\$51532.00	\$4295.00	\$2148.00	\$1982.00	\$991.00
8	\$57356.00	\$4780.00	\$2390.00	\$2206.00	\$1103.00
Each additional person	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$

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](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), and at 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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

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