PUBLIC RELEASE

McKenzie Special School District today announced its policy for free and reduced-price meals for children served in schools under the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program. Local school officials have adopted the following household size and income criteria for determining eligibility:

FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART For School Year 2026- 2027

	Federal Poverty Guidelines	Reduced-Price Meals				Free Meals			
Household size	Annual	Yearly	Monthly	Every two weeks	Weekly	Yearly	Monthly	Every two weeks	Weekly
1	15,960	29,526	2,461	1,136	568	20,748	1,729	798	399
2	21,640	40,034	3,337	1,540	770	28,132	2,345	1,082	541
3	27,320	50,542	4,212	1,944	972	35,516	2,960	1,366	683
4	33,000	61,050	5,088	2,349	1,175	42,900	3,575	1,650	825
5	38,680	71,558	5,964	2,753	1,377	50,284	4,191	1,934	967
6	44,360	82,066	6,839	3,157	1,579	57,668	4,806	2,218	1,109
7	50,040	92,574	7,715	3,561	1,781	65,052	5,421	2,502	1,251
8	55,720	103,082	8,591	3,965	1,983	72,436	6,037	2,786	1,393
Each additional person:	5,680	10,508	876	405	203	7,384	616	284	142

Children need healthy meals to learn. McKenzie Special School District offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast and lunch meals will follow the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines for healthy school meals, so please encourage students to participate. “In the operation of child feeding programs, no child will be discriminated against because of race, sex, color, national origin, age, or disability.”

McKenzie Special School District offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs 0**;** lunch costs $2.00 at McKenzie Elementary School and $2.50 at McKenzie Middle and McKenzie High School. . **Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced-price meals.** Reduced price is $0.00 for breakfast and $.40 for lunch. Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

1. WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED-PRICE 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 the chart above.
- All children in households receiving benefits from the **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)**, or **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** are eligible for free meals.
- All children in the households receiving benefits from Medicaid may be eligible for free or reduced meals.
- Foster children who 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 who are directly certified are eligible to receive free meals.
- When known to McKenzie Special School District, households will be notified of their children's eligibility for free meals based on their participation (or a household member's participation) in the SNAP, FDPIR, or TANF, if the State program meets Federal standards.
- When known to McKenzie Special School District households will be notified of any child's eligibility for free meals based on the individual child's designation as Other Source Categorically Eligible, as defined by law. Children are determined Other Source Categorically Eligible if they are:
  - homeless,
  - migrant,
  - runaway, or
  - foster child.
- Enrolled in Head Start or an eligible pre-kindergarten program (see: SP 40-2013: Q&As Regarding the Participation of Head Start Programs in Child Nutrition Programs, https://www.fns.usda.gov/qas-regarding-participation-head-start programs-child-nutrition- programs-0).

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 have not been told your children will get free meals, please call or email Ladona Herrin at herrinl@mckenzieschools.org

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:Laura Martin at martinl9@mckenzieschools.org

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 Laura Martin at martinl9@mckenzieschools.org 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 the PowerSchool forms website to begin or to learn more about the online application process. Contact the school office to find out out to complete the forms online

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 submit a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year. If you do not submit a new application that is approved by the school, or you have not been notified that your child is eligible for free meals, your child will be charged the full price for meals.

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 submit an application.

8. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED?
Yes. In accordance with program regulations, school officials will verify the income of some households periodically during the school year. Selected households will be asked to provide income documentation to continue receiving free and reduced-price meals.

9. IF I DO NOT 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: Laura Martin at martinl9@mckenzieschools.org

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 $1,000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only made $900, put down that you made $1,000 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. DO I HAVE TO PROVIDE MY SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER?
Only the last four (4) digits of the social security number of the household's primary wage earner or another adult household member (or an indication of "none") is required.

15. MAY I DECLINE BENEFITS?
Yes. Households notified of their children's eligibility must contact McKenzie Special School District or school if they choose to decline the free meal benefits.

16. WHAT IF ALL CHILDREN ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS ARE NOT ON THE NOTICE OF ELIGIBILITY LETTER? If children or households receive benefits under Assistance Programs or Other Source Categorically Eligible Programs and are not listed on the notice of eligibility and are not notified by the school of their free meal benefits, the parent or guardian should contact the school or submit an income application.

17. 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, 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.

18. WHAT IF THERE IS NOT 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 Laura Martin at martinl9@mckenzieschools.org to receive a second application.

19. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for **SNAP** or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call **(866) 311-4287**.

If you have other questions or need help, call 731-352-2246 and ask to speak to Laura Martin.

Sincerely,

Laura Martin

Food Service Director

McKenzie Special School District

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