



## POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS Frequently Asked Questions



**Q1: Where can I get a free and reduced price application for meal benefits?**

**A1:** You may apply online at [www.applyforlunch.com](http://www.applyforlunch.com) or pick up a paper meal application from the school office.

**Q2: Why is it necessary to use BLACK or BLUE INK to complete the application form?**

**A2:** The scanning process recognizes black and blue ink the best. The scanner cannot recognize markings made in pencil or red ink. Therefore, applications completed in pencil or red ink will be sent back to the applicant.

**Q3: Where do I send my completed paper application?**

**A3:** Mail completed application to: Food and Nutrition Department, 12225 Kirkham Road, Suite 100, Poway, CA 92064-8847, or you can drop it off at your youngest child's school. You can also personally deliver your application to the Food and Nutrition office located in the Poway Industrial Center, at 12225 Kirkham Road, Suite 100, Poway, CA 92064.

**Q4: Who can get free or reduced price meals?**

**A4:** Children receiving SNAP (formerly the Food Stamp Program), CalWORKs, KinGAP, or FDPIR. You are also eligible for meal benefits if your household income is within the limits on the Federal Income Chart. A foster child or children living in a group home are also eligible.

**Q5: How long does it take to process an application?**

**A5:** Online applications are normally processed within 24 hours. Paper applications usually take ten (10) school days after receipt in the Food and Nutrition Department. However, it may take longer for paper applications at the start of school due to high volume.

**Q6: Will I need to pay for my child's meals until the application is processed?**

**A6:** **Yes**, meal benefits start only after the **approval date** of your application.

**Q7: How will I know if my child qualifies for free or reduced price meals?**

**A7:** The Food and Nutrition Department notifies all families who submit an application of their child's status by mail.

**Q8: Why is it necessary to use the same name as it appears on the Birth Certificate?**

**A8:** The District uses birth dates and names from Birth Certificates for all school records. Your application can only be validated if you use the same information.

**Q9: Who should I include on the application as members of my household?**

**A9:** You must include every person living in your house, related or not. This includes yourself, your spouse, all children, grandparents, relatives, friends, babies, etc.

**Q10: Do I have to complete a free/reduced application each year?**

**A10:** **Yes**. You must complete a new complete application each school year for approval.

**Q11: Will my child's free status from last school year carry over to the current school year?**

**A11:** **Yes**, your child's status will carry over only for the **first 30 school days**. You must complete a new application each school year.

**Q12: Do pre-kindergarten students automatically qualify for free/reduced meals?**

**A12:** **No**. All students must complete a Free and Reduced Price Meal application each year.



## POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS Frequently Asked Questions (Continued)



**Q13: Do I need to fill out a separate application for each child?**

**A13: No.** Use one application form for all children (preschool, elementary, middle, and high school) in your household (including foster children).

**Q14: My children were free last year and our current income is identical to last year. Why are my children eligible for reduced price meals this year?**

**A14:** This is very common. The Federal Income Guidelines change every year which may change your eligibility status.

**Q15: Why do I need to sign and enter the last 4 digits of my Social Security Number (SSN) on the application?**

**A15:** These two sections are required by law. Failure to sign the application and enter the last 4 digits of your SSN, or check the box if you do not have a SSN, will cause the application to be returned to the applicant.

**Q16: Do foster children qualify for free meals?**

**A16: Yes.** Foster children qualify for free meals. List all children, including foster children, on the same application form and include all income received by the foster children.

**Q17: Why was my application for meal benefits denied?**

**A17:** Your income may be too high. Also, you may have omitted or incorrectly completed important information on the application form.

**Q18: Can my children receive free meals if they qualified for free meals in another district?**

**A18: No.** You must first complete a meal benefit application for Poway Unified School District.

**Q19: How can my child owe money if he or she is authorized free meals?**

**A19:** Your child may have purchased an a la carte item (such as juice) that is not free. Also, your child may have consumed meals before your application was officially approved. Parents are liable for all food items consumed by their children in both cases.

**Q20: Can homeless, runaway, and migrant children get free meals?**

**A20: Yes.** Please contact Alternative Programs at 748-0010 ext. 2530 to see if your children meet the criteria for homeless, runaway, or migrant.

**Q21: Who has permission to see my application for free and reduced price meals?**

**A21:** The authorizing official and specific Board approved school district officials.

**Q22: Once approved for meal benefits, what is the process for my child to receive breakfast/lunch at the school site?**

**A22:** Please inform your child to go to the school nutrition center (formerly cafeteria) and enter his or her six (6) digit Personal Identification Number (PIN) on the keypad next to the cashier station. **Note:** Secondary school students must select a school lunch. **A La Carte items are not part of the school meals program and are priced separately for all students.**