

POLICY STATEMENT FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS and AFTER SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM PROTOTYPE

The _____ has agreed to participate in the:
(Name of Local Education Agency [LEA])

- National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and/or
- School Breakfast Program (SBP) and/or
- Afterschool Care Program
- Special Milk Program (kindergarten or preschool)
- Special Milk Program (only schools children that do not have access to the NSLP or SBP).

and accepts responsibility for providing either:

- Free and reduced price meals and/or
- Free milk to eligible children in “split session” kindergarten or
- Free milk to eligible children in “milk only” schools or
- Free or reduced price after school snacks.

The _____ assures the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE)
(Name of LEA)

that the LEA will uniformly implement the following policy to determine children’s eligibility for free and reduced price meals and free and reduced price snacks and/or free milk for kindergarten in all schools that participate in the NSLP and/or SBP and/or Afterschool Care Program. In fulfilling its responsibilities, the LEA agrees to all conditions outlined in this “Policy.”

In fulfilling its responsibilities, the LEA agrees:

A. To serve meals and/or after school snacks (or milk in those schools which offer the free milk option under the SMP) free to children from families who provide a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (formerly known as Food Stamps) case number or a Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) case number on the application, or whose income is at or below the free scale of the Income Eligibility Guidelines.

B. To serve meals and/or after school snacks at a reduced price to children from households whose income is at or below the reduced price scale of the Income Eligibility Guidelines.

C. That there will be no physical segregation of, nor any other discrimination against, any child because of his/her inability to pay the full price of the meal or milk. The names of the children eligible to receive free or reduced price meals and/or after school snacks or free milk shall not be published, posted, or announced in any manner, and there shall be no overt identification of any such children by use of special tokens, tickets or any other means. Further assurance is given that children eligible for free or reduced price meals and/or after school snacks or free milk shall not be required to:

1. Work for their meals or milk.
2. Use a separate lunchroom or milk service area.
3. Go through a separate serving line.
4. Enter the lunchroom through a separate entrance.
5. Eat meals or drink milk at a different time.



6. Eat a meal different from the one sold to children paying the full price or drink milk different from that sold to children paying the full price.

D. To set reduced price charges for lunch, breakfast or after school snacks at or below the maximum reduced price allowed by regulations and below the full price of the lunch or breakfast. **(The reduced price is as follows: 40 cents per lunch; 30 cents per breakfast; and 15 cents for after school snacks).**

E. That, in the operation of school nutrition programs, no child shall be discriminated against because of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

F. To **verify** in accordance with program regulations and maintain records as follows:

1. A summary of the verification efforts;
2. The total number of applications on file **on October 1**; and
3. The percentage or number of applications verified.

Compliance with these requirements will be monitored by the State agency as part of its supervisory assistance monitoring and verification efforts.

G. To establish and use a fair hearing procedure under which:

1. A family can appeal a decision made by the LEA with respect to the family's free milk or free and reduced price meal application; and
2. The LEA can challenge the continued eligibility of any child for free or reduced price meals and/or after school snack or free milk.

During the appeal and hearing, the child who was determined to be eligible based on the original application submitted will continue to receive free or reduced price meals or free milk. Prior to initiating the hearing procedure, the school official, the parent/guardian may request a conference to provide an opportunity for the parent/guardian and school officials to discuss the situation, present information, obtain an explanation of data submitted in the application and the decisions rendered. Such a conference shall not in any way prejudice or diminish the right to a fair hearing.

The hearing procedure shall provide the following for both the family and the LEA:

1. A publicly announced, simple method for making an oral or written request for a hearing.
2. An opportunity to be assisted or represented by an attorney or other person.
3. An opportunity to examine, prior to and during the hearing, the documents and records presented to support the decision under appeal.
4. Reasonable promptness and convenience in scheduling a hearing, and adequate notice as to its time and place.
5. An opportunity to present oral or documentary evidence and arguments supporting a Position without undue interference.
6. An opportunity to question or refute any testimony or other evidence and to confront and cross-examine any adverse witnesses.
7. That the hearing be conducted and the decision be made by an official who did not participate in the decision under appeal or any previous conference.
8. That the decision of the hearing official be based on the oral and documentary evidence



presented at the hearing and entered into the hearing record.

9. That the parties concerned and any designated representative thereof be notified in writing of the decision.
10. That for each hearing a written record be prepared, including the decision under appeal, any documentary evidence and a summary of any oral testimony presented at the hearing, the decision of the hearing official and the reasons therefore, and a copy of the notification to the parties concerned, of the hearing.
11. That such written records shall be retained for a period of 3 years after the date of the final Claim for Reimbursement for the fiscal year to which they pertain, except that if audit findings have not been resolved, the records shall be retained beyond the 3 year period as long as required for resolution of the issues raised by the audit. These records must be made available for examination by the parties concerned or their designees at any reasonable time and place during the period.

H. To designate a determining official(s):

(Name) (Title)

(Address) (City, State, Zip)

to **review applications and make determinations of eligibility**. Such official(s) will use the criteria outlined in this policy to determine which individual children are eligible for free and reduced price meals or free milk.

I. To develop and distribute to each child's parents or guardian a letter as provided in sample on-line materials. In addition, an application form for free and reduced price meals or free milk shall be distributed with the parent letter at or about the beginning of each school year or whenever there is a change in eligibility criteria. The letter to parents with the free and reduced price meal application attachment shall have **only the income eligibility guidelines for reduced price meals** with an explanation that households with incomes at or below the reduced price guidelines may be eligible for either free or reduced price meals. **The letter to parents with the free milk application form shall list the income eligibility guidelines for free milk.**

Interested parents or guardians are responsible for filling out the application and returning it to the school for review. Such applications and documentation of determinations made will be maintained for a period of 3 years following the end of the school year to which they pertain.

Applications may be filed at any time during the year. Parents or guardians enrolling a child in a school for the first time shall be supplied with appropriate meal or milk application materials regardless of the time of year the child is registered. If a child transfers from one school to another under the jurisdiction of the same LEA, his/her eligibility for free or reduced price meals or free milk will be transferred to and honored by the receiving school.

Parents or guardians will be promptly notified of the acceptance or denial of their application. Children will be served meals or milk immediately upon the establishment of their eligibility.

It is recognized that in certain cases foster children are also eligible for these benefits. If a household has a child living with them who is a legal ward of the state of Wyoming, that child is considered a family of one, and monthly income from the State should be listed.



LEAs shall log onto the Direct Certification website at the beginning of each month to find student names who will be eligible for free meals.

When an application is rejected, parents or guardians will be provided written notification, which shall include:

1. The reason for the denial of benefits, e.g., income in excess of allowable limits or incomplete application;
2. Notification of the right to appeal;
3. Instructions on how to appeal; and
4. A statement reminding parents that they may reapply for free and reduced price benefits or free milk at any time during the school year.

The reasons for ineligibility shall be properly documented and retained on file at the LEA level.

The designated hearing official is:

(Name)	(Title)
(Address) (City, State, Zip)	

Note: *The hearing official must be someone **not** involved in the original eligibility determination. It is suggested that he/she hold a position at a higher administrative level than that of the determining official.*

J. To **submit a public/press release** containing both the free and reduced price eligibility guidelines and all other information outlined in the parent letter, to the local news media, local unemployment offices and major employers contemplating or experiencing large layoffs.

K. To establish a procedure to collect money from children who pay for their meals, after school snacks and milk and to account for the number of free, reduced price and full price meals and/or after school snacks served or the number of half-pints of free and full price milk served. This collection procedure will be used so that no other child in the school will consciously be made aware by such procedure of the identity of the children receiving free or reduced price meals or free milk. This procedure is described in detail in the WDE Permanent Agreement.

L. Agrees to submit to the Wyoming Department of Education any alterations, etc., before implementation. Such changes will be effective only upon approval. All changes in eligibility criteria must be publicly announced in the same manner used at the beginning of the school year.



M. Wyoming Department of Education Child Nutrition Programs Verification of Updated Software
(For districts or agencies that use an on line application software).

I, (name and title) _____ contacted (Software System name) _____ to verify that the USDA policies and procedures are being followed. Current guidance on Meal Eligibility as it relates to Software Programs has been communicated between both parties.

Date of Contact: _____ Date software updates received: _____

Signature of Software Program Representative and Title _____ Date _____

Signature of School Official and Title _____ Date _____

The signature of the school/agency official signifies that all information in this document are understood and agreed upon.

Signature Date

School District – Superintendent
Private School – Principal or Chairman of the Board
Residential Child Care Institution - Director

