

## **Free and Reduced Price Meals**

### **How does a child qualify for free and reduced-price meals?**

Eligibility is generally based on family income, family size, and if the family has a food stamp number. Guidelines for free and reduced meals are set by U.S.D.A.

### **How are families notified if a child qualifies for free/reduced-price meals?**

The Child Nutrition Department notifies all families who submit an application of their child's status by mail.

### **How do children get an application?**

Applications are given to every student at the beginning of the school year by the child's campus. New students are given an application upon registration. During the year, applications are available in all cafeterias and the Child Nutrition office.

### **How often does a free/reduced application need to be completed?**

An application must be completed each school year.

### **How long is the application valid?**

Students who participate in the free/reduced program during the previous year in BISD may continue to eat at the free or reduced-price for the first 30 days of school. After 30 days, a new application must be submitted and approved for meal benefits to continue.

### **How long does it take to process an application?**

Upon receipt of the completed application the Child Nutrition Department has ten business days to complete the processing procedure.

### **Will parents need to pay for a child's lunch/breakfast until the application is processed?**

Yes

### **Do Pre-Kindergarten students automatically qualify for free/reduced meals?**

No. All students must complete an application each year.

### **What does the school district do to protect the personal information about a child?**

All information is kept confidential in the Child Nutrition office and is only given to authorized school district officials.

## **Menu Selection**

### **Who determines what food choices will be available on the daily menu?**

The reimbursable menus are planned to meet federal nutrition guidelines while meeting the preferences of the students. Each year students complete surveys and input is gathered from students and parents. In addition, a nutritional analysis is conducted on menus to make sure that they meet the RDA for each nutrient.

### **Is the school district required to meet any nutritional guidelines?**

The federal government requires that meals served in our cafeterias meet specific guidelines regarding portion size, food choices, and content (protein, vitamins, minerals and fat).

### **How do I know what is on the menu?**

Elementary students are given cycle menus at the start of each school year. Middle, Intermediate and High Schools have a variety of foods offered everyday. See the BISD menus here.

## **Offer versus Serve**

### **Who determines what food goes on my child's tray?**

By federal law, the school cafeteria must allow the child to choose what he/she wants to eat from the selections available.

### **What is a reimbursable meal?**

Only meals that meet the government requirements for meal patterns are subsidized. For instance, in a given day at lunch the requirements would be 2 ounces of meat,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup fruit and/or vegetables, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint of milk. Each week 8 servings of bread must be offered. In order for a meal to be reimbursable 3 out of these 5 food groups need to be selected.

## **Meal Charging/Financial Accountability**

### **What is the district's policy on charging meals?**

Students are allowed three charges, \$5.25 for Elementary and \$6.00 for Middle School students. If a student's account exceeds the charge limit the students will be given an alternate meal (cheese sandwich and milk). Students will be given notices as their account balance becomes low or negative. No charges are allowed at the Intermediate and High School campuses.

### **Is the Child Nutrition Department self-funded?**

Yes. Our revenue is generated from individual sales and government funding of reimbursable free, reduced and paid student meals. All profits must go back into the Child Nutrition Program.

## **Nutrition Education**

### **What involvement does the Child Nutrition Department have in educating students on nutrition?**

Classroom nutrition education taught by Child Nutrition administrative staff is available for classes on request. In addition Child Nutrition Services offers videos and educational materials that are available on request.