



Pierce County Schools

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PUBLIC MEDIA RELEASE

The **Pierce County School District** announces its policy for free and reduced price meals for children unable to pay the full price served in schools under the National School Lunch Program and/or School Breakfast Program. Local school officials have adopted the following family size and income criteria for determining eligibility.

FAMILY SIZE	COLUMN I FREE MEALS If family income is within	COLUMN II REDUCED PRICE MEALS If family income is within
1	0 to 17,667	17,668 to 25,142
2	0 to 23,803	23,804 to 33,874
3	0 to 29,939	29,940 to 42,606
4	0 to 36,075	36,076 to 51,338
5	0 to 42,211	42,212 to 60,070
6	0 to 48,347	48,348 to 68,802
7	0 to 54,483	54,484 to 77,534
8	0 to 60,619	60,620 to 86,266

For each additional family member, add \$6,136 per year to the income level for free meals and \$8,732 to the income level for reduced price meals.

Children are eligible for free or reduced price meals under the following:

- Children from families whose income is at or below the levels shown in the table above.
- All children in households receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
- Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court. Families with foster children should contact the school for information regarding benefits.
- Children participating in their school's Head Start program.
- Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant. Contact the school for information regarding benefits.

Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please send in an application.

Application forms are being sent to all homes with a letter to parents or guardians. To apply for free or reduced price meals, households should fill out the application and return it to the school. Use one Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application for all students in your household. The information provided on the application will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and may be verified at any time with each school district required to verify a sample annually. Applications may be submitted at any time during the year. Additional forms are available at each school.

For school officials to determine eligibility, households receiving SNAP or TANF must list the child's name, their SNAP or TANF case number, and the signature of an adult household member. Households not receiving SNAP or TANF must list child's name, names of all household members, the last four digits of the Social Security number of a parent or guardian (or an indication of no Social Security number), the amount of

income received by each household member identified by source and frequency, and the signature of an adult household member certifying that the information provided is correct. An application that is not complete cannot be approved.

If a household does not agree with the eligibility determination, a hearing may be requested with **Dara Bennett, Superintendent** at **912-449-2044** or at **dbennett@pierce.k12.ga.us**.

The information provided by the household is confidential and will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and verifying data. We may inform officials connected with other child nutrition, health, and education programs of the information on your form to determine benefits for those programs or for funding and/or evaluation purposes.

A child's free or reduced price eligibility status from the previous year will continue in the same school district for up to 30 operating days in the new school year. If a new application is not approved or the child is not directly certified by this time, meals will be charged at the full price.

Breakfast Cost			Lunch Cost		
	Reduced	Paid		Reduced	Paid
Elementary Schools	CEP	CEP	Elementary Schools	CEP	CEP
Middle School	CEP	CEP	Middle School	CEP	CEP
High School	FREE	FREE	High School	\$0.40	\$2.50

If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size increases, the household should contact the school. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household's income falls at or below the levels shown above.

For questions or additional help, contact **Becky Swain, SNP Director** at **912-449-2044** or at **beckyswain@pierce.k12.ga.us**.

The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act requires the information on this application. You do not have to give the information, but if you do not, we cannot approve your child for free or reduced price meals. You must include the last four digits of the Social Security number of an adult household member. The last four digits of the Social Security number is not required when you apply on behalf of a foster child or you list a Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program or when you indicate that the adult household member signing the application does not have a Social Security number. We will use your information to determine if your child is eligible for free or reduced price meals, and for administration and enforcement of the lunch and breakfast programs. We MAY share your eligibility information with education, health, and nutrition programs to help them evaluate, fund, or determine benefits for their programs, auditors for program reviews, and law enforcement officials to help them look into violations of program rules.

Non-Discrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly.

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, audiotope, 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: <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint>, 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.

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