



Okaloosa Academy

Home of the LEAP Program

720 Lovejoy Rd. NW

Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548

Phone: (850)864-3133

Fax: (850)864-4305

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Okaloosa Academy/Okaloosa County School District offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs \$1.80; lunch costs \$3.00. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals. Reduced price is \$.30 for breakfast and \$.40 for lunch. Below are some common questions and answers to aid in the process of determining your child's eligibility.

1. 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: Okaloosa Academy, 720 Lovejoy Rd. NW, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32548.

2. WHO CAN GET FREE MEALS? All children in households receiving benefits from [State SNAP], [the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR)] or [State TANF], can get free meals regardless of your income. Also, your children can get free meals if your household's gross income is within the free limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines.

If you have received a NOTICE OF DIRECT CERTIFICATION for free meals, do not complete the application. But do let the school know if any children in your household are not listed on the Notice of Direct Certification letter you received.

3. CAN FOSTER CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS? Yes, foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court, are eligible for free meals.

4. CAN HOMELESS, RUNAWAY, HEAD START AND MIGRANT CHILDREN GET FREE MEALS? Yes, children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals. If you believe children in your household meet these descriptions and haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call or e-mail Amy Dale @ 850-833-3521 or email: DaleA@okaloosaschools.com.

5. WHO CAN GET REDUCED PRICE MEALS? Your children can get reduced price meals if your household income is within the reduced-price limits on the Federal Eligibility Income Chart, shown on this application.

6. SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS? No, but please read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. Call the school at 850-864-3133 ext. 205 if you have questions.

7. 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 send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year.
8. 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 send in an application.
9. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? Yes and we may also ask you to send written proof.
10. IF I DON'T 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.
11. 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: Cheryl Vigrén , 101 A Business Centre Drive, Miramar Beach, FL 32550 or phone 850-650-3984 ext. 101.
12. MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN? Yes. You or your children do not have to be U.S. citizens to qualify for free or reduced-price meals.
13. WHO SHOULD I INCLUDE AS MEMBERS OF MY HOUSEHOLD? You must include all people living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends) who share income and expenses. You must include yourself and all children living with you. If you live with other people who are economically independent (for example, people who you do not support, who do not share income with you or your children, and who pay a pro-rated share of expenses), do not include them.
14. WHAT IF MY INCOME IS NOT ALWAYS THE SAME? List the amount that you normally receive. For example, if you normally make \$1000 each month, but you missed some work last month and only made \$900, put down that you made \$1000 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.
15. WE ARE IN THE MILITARY. DO WE INCLUDE OUR HOUSING ALLOWANCE AS INCOME? If you get an off-base housing allowance, it must be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income.
16. MY SPOUSE IS DEPLOYED TO A COMBAT ZONE. IS HER COMBAT PAY COUNTED AS INCOME? No, if the combat pay is received in addition to her basic pay because of her deployment and it wasn't received before she was deployed, combat pay is not counted as income. Contact your child's school for more information.
17. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for [State SNAP] or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call 1-800-762-2237.

If you have other questions or need help, call 850-864-3133.

Sincerely,

Christol Jarrett

MS/LEAP Director & High School Director

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

fax: (202) 690-7442; or

email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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