



Student Meal Program Waiver Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why did the USDA provide a waiver for free meals?

The USDA is authorizing the DoD to provide free meals to ensure access to nutritious meals for all students, regardless of means, and reduce the administrative burden on school meal program providers facing increased operating challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. What meals does the waiver cover?

Breakfast (where available) and lunch are offered free of charge for all DoDEA students. À la carte and Lunch Plus will still be available, but payment requirements will still apply.

3. When does the waiver go into effect?

Meals will be free of charge to all students beginning 2 November 2020. Meals purchased during the beginning of SY 2020-2021 will be reimbursed NLT 6 November 2020.

4. How long does the waiver last?

The waiver is effective until 30 June 2021. This date is subject to change based upon USDA modifications.

5. Reimbursable meals purchased this school year before 2 November will be credited to my account. When can I expect this credit to show on my student's meal account?

The credit will show on Nov 2, 2020.

6. Will I be able to request a refund for unused meal funds?

Yes. If you are interested in requesting a refund for your student's meal account please visit your local AAFES Exchange customer service.

7. My student does not currently participate in the student meal program, is she/he eligible?

Yes, but you should first establish a student meal program account with AAFES/NEX/MCCS and communicate with the school nurse and kitchen manager regarding any food allergies or dietary restrictions.

8. Do I need to fill out an application to receive free meals under this waiver?

No. Families can elect to participate and receive free meals any time between now and 30 June 2021 .

9. What if we forget to establish an account? Will my student still be provided a meal?

Yes. As always, a student will never be declined a meal. However, sponsors should make every effort to establish a SMP account for their student(s) to help ensure proper program administration, address any allergy concerns, and prevent disruptions to the food service process.

10. My student is currently enrolled in the DoDEA Virtual School. Are DVS students allowed to participate in the SMP?

Yes, all students enrolled in DoDEA schools serviced by USDA SMP are eligible to participate. Parents/sponsors should establish a SMP account with AAFES/NEX/MCCS and then inquire with their local DoDEA schools regarding specific procedures.

11. I home school my students. Are we eligible for free meals?

If home school students have a DoDEA student ID number and are receiving auxiliary services or enrolled in at least one course, they are eligible to participate in the student meal program.

12. Will à la carte items still be available?

À la carte items will still be offered at participating DoDEA schools. However, students will be charged normal prices for à la carte items.

13. Will “seconds” still be available?

Lunch Plus or seconds will still be offered at all DoDEA schools. However, students will be charged for Lunch Plus options.

14. Are families allowed to opt out of the waiver and continue paying for their students’ meals?

Participation in the meal program is completely optional. However, during the waiver period, it is not possible to pay for a reimbursable meal. A student can receive the reimbursable meal at no cost or purchase the meal components individually a la carte. A la carte prices vary depending on what is purchased.

15. My child is a U.S. citizen, but enrolled in a non-DoDEA curriculum in an International school. Is my child eligible to receive free meals under this waiver.

Unfortunately, students must be enrolled in a participating DoDEA school to be eligible to receive free reimbursable meals, per Title 10, sec 2243.