

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FREE AND REDUCED PRICE SCHOOL MEALS

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. **Cornerstone Academy** offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs \$ 2.00; 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. This packet includes an application for free or reduced price meal benefits, and a set of detailed instructions. Below are some common questions and answers to help you with the application process.

1. WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS?

- All children in households receiving benefits from supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) or Ohio Works First (OWF) are eligible for free meals.
- **Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.**
- **Children participating in their school's Head Start program are eligible for free meals.**
- Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals.
- Children may receive free or reduced price meals if your household's income is within the limits on the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Your children may qualify for free or reduced price meals if your household income falls at or below the limits on this chart.

Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$22,311	\$1,860	\$430
2	30,044	2,504	578
3	37,777	3,149	727
4	45,510	3,793	876
5	53,243	4,437	1,024
6	60,976	5,082	1,173
7	68,709	5,726	1,322
8	76,442	6,371	1,471
Each additional	7,733	645	149

2. HOW DO I KNOW IF MY CHILDREN QUALIFY AS HOMELESS, MIGRANT, OR RUNAWAY? Do the members of your household lack a permanent address? Are you staying together in a shelter, hotel, or other temporary housing arrangement? Does your family relocate on a seasonal basis? Are any children living with you who have chosen to leave their prior family or household? 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 **Rebecca Keaton, (614) 775-0615, rkeaton@cornerstoneacad.org**.
3. 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: **Rebecca Keaton, (614) 775-0615.**
4. SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILDREN ARE ALREADY APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS? No, but please read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact **Rebecca Keaton, (614) 775-0615, rkeaton@cornerstoneacad.org** immediately.
5. CAN I APPLY ONLINE? No. Unfortunately we do not have an online applications at this time.
6. 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, through **August 23, 2017**. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new school year. If you do not send in a new application that is approved by the school or you have not been notified that your child is eligible for free meals, your child will be charged the full price for meals.
7. 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.
8. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED? Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.
9. 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.
10. 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: **Natalee Long, (614) 775-0615.**
11. MAY I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN? Yes. You, your children, or other household members do not have to be U.S. citizens to apply for free or reduced price meals.

12. 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.
13. WHAT IF SOME HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS HAVE NO INCOME TO REPORT? Household members may not receive some types of income we ask you to report on the application, or may not receive income at all. Whenever this happens, please write a 0 in the field. However, if any income fields are left empty or blank, those will also be counted as zeroes. Please be careful when leaving income fields blank, as we will assume you meant to do so.
14. WE ARE IN THE MILITARY. DO WE REPORT OUR INCOME DIFFERENTLY? Your basic pay and cash bonuses must be reported as income. If you get any cash value allowances for off-base housing, food, or clothing, it must also be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income. Any additional combat pay resulting from deployment is also excluded from income.
15. WHAT IF THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SPACE ON THE APPLICATION FOR MY FAMILY? List any additional household members on a separate piece of paper, and attach it to your application. Contact **Rebecca Keaton, (614) 775-0615, rkeaton@cornerstoneacad.org to receive a second application.**
16. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP. ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR? To find out how to apply for Ohio SNAP or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call 877-852-0010.
17. CAN I PAY ONLINE? Yes, **Cornerstone Academy** now offers online payments through **EZ-Pay**. Your child will bring home information during the first week of the school year.
18. HOW DO I PAY FOR MEALS? You can pay online or in person at the front office. At this time cash, check and money order are accepted.
19. CAN I PREPAY MY CHILD'S ACCOUNT? Yes! We encourage families to look at the Menu and calendar to determine weekly and monthly meal purchases. Weekly meal charges for full pay is **\$ 25.00 breakfast and lunch; \$ 15.00 lunch; \$ 10.00 breakfast**. Weekly meal charges for reduced pay is **\$ 3.50 breakfast and lunch; \$ 2.00 lunch; \$ 1.50 breakfast**.
20. WHAT IF MY CHILD DOES NOT HAVE MONEY ON THEIR ACCOUNT? Credit is extended to students for 10 meals or \$25.00, whichever comes first. After the allowable credit limit has been reached they will be given our "sack" lunch. This consists of ½ of the required meal components including protein, fruit or vegetable, and grain. **THIS IS NOT A SUFFICIENT MEAL.**
21. MY CHILD'S ACCOUNT IS NEGATIVE FROM A PREVIOUS YEAR, CAN THEY PURCHASE MEALS OR AN ADDITIONAL MILK? Any student with a negative balance that brings the full cost of their meal (\$ 3.00 full pay / \$.40 reduced) on any given day will be allowed to purchase on that day only. Children eligible for Free Meals will never be denied a meal or given a "sack" lunch. Additional milks cannot be purchased on a negative account.
22. HOW DO I FIND OUT MY CHILD'S ACCOUNT BALANCE? Balances can be found on PowerSchool, <https://columbuscornerstone.powerschool.com/parent> and on EZ-Pay (information will come home the first week of school). Checking your child's account regularly will keep you informed and ensure your child continues receiving balanced school meals.
23. WHAT ACCOUNT NOTICES WILL I RECEIVE? **Cornerstone Academy's notification system, School Messenger**, will send out negative account notices every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday as well as low balance notices (any amount under the cost of your child's meal - \$0.00) every Monday and Friday.
24. HOW WILL I KNOW IF MY CHILD HAS RECEIVED A "SACK" LUNCH? Emails are sent home as soon as all students have been served lunch for those that received a "sack" lunch. On your child's PowerSchool Lunch Transaction summary you will find an entry for **SACK LUNCH** on any day your child received a "sack" lunch. Any questions should be directed to **Rebecca Keaton, (614) 775-0615, rkeaton@cornerstoneacad.org**.

If you have other questions or need help, call **(614) 775-0615**.

Regards,

Rebecca Keaton
Food Services Director