

LETTER TO HOUSEHOLDS 2017-2018

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Children need healthy meals to learn. Mesa County Valley School District 51 offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs **\$1.85** at all schools (K-12) and lunch costs **\$2.85** at the elementary level (grades K-5) **\$3.00** for grades 6-8 and **\$3.25** for grades 9-12 and at the Fruita 8/9. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced price meals. The reduced price is **\$0.00** for breakfast and **\$0.40** for lunch.

Students in all grades that qualify for reduced price meals will receive breakfast at no charge. Students in preschool through 5th grade who qualify for reduced meals will also receive lunch at no charge.

1. Who can receive free meals?

- a. All children in households receiving benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF (also known as Colorado Works) – Basic Cash Assistance or State Diversion), are eligible for free meals.
- b. **Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.**
- c. **Children participating in their schools Head Start program are eligible for free meals.**
- d. Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals.
- e. 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.

FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART For School Year 2017 – 2018			
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 family Member add:	\$7,733	\$645	\$149

2. How do I know if my children qualify as Homeless, Runaway or Migrant?

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 already been notified your children will receive free meals, please call **HOMELESS (REACH)** at **(970)254-5488** or **MIGRANT** at **(970)254-5495**.

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: **Connie Barteck, Nutrition Services, Mesa County Valley School District 51, 2280 E. Main St. Grand Junction, CO 81501. (970-254-5181)**

4. 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 received carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact Connie Barteck at Nutrition Services (970)254-5181 or Connie.Barteck@d51schools.org immediately.

5. Can I apply online?

Yes! You are encouraged to complete an online application instead of a paper application if you are able. The online application has the same requirements and will ask you for the same information as the paper application. Go to MySchoolApps.com to apply online. Contact Connie Barteck at Nutrition Services (970)254-5181 or Connie.Barteck@d51schools.org **if you have any questions about the online application.**

6. My child's application was approved last year. Do I need to fill out another one? Yes. Your child's application is only valid for that school year and for the first 30 days of this school year. You must send in a new application unless Nutrition Services notified you that your child is eligible for the new school year.

7. **I receive WIC. Can my children receive 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, and we may ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.
9. **If I don't qualify now, may I apply again later?** Yes. You may apply at any time during the school year. For example, children with a parent or guardian who become unemployed may become eligible for free or reduced price meals if your household income drops below the income limit.
10. **What if I disagree with Nutrition Services decision about my application?** You should talk to Nutrition Services officials. You also may ask for a hearing by calling or writing to: **Dan Sharp, Nutrition Services, 2280 E. Main St. Grand Junction, CO 81501. (970)254-5191.**
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 blank, those will also be counted as zeros. 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, or receive Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance payments, 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.
16. **My family needs more help. Are there other programs we might apply?** To find out how to apply for other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office. Colorado PEAK is an online service to screen and apply for medical, food, and cash assistance programs. It can be accessed at <http://coloradopeak.force.com/>.

If you have other questions or need help, call **(970)254-5181**.

Sincerely,

Connie Barteck

Eligibility Official

Mesa County Valley S.D. 51

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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. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.