

MEDIA RELEASE 2020-2021

POLICY FOR PROVIDING FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS

July 16, 2020

(Date)

Alexandria City Public Schools

(School division)

today announced its policy for providing free or reduced price meals for children served under the National School Lunch, and/or School Breakfast Programs. Each school and/or central school nutrition office has a copy of the policy, which may be reviewed by any interested party.

Some schools in the division, **Cora Kelly School for Math, Science and Technology AND William Ramsay Elementary**, will be participating in the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) as implemented under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. All students enrolled at these schools will be provided a nutritious meal for breakfast and lunch each day at **no charge**. Households with students attending these schools will not be required to submit a meal application form for these students to receive meals at no charge. Each household with students attending these schools will receive communication about CEP, including contact information for any questions.

In all other schools, household size and income will be used to determine eligibility for free or reduced price meal benefits. Children from households whose income is at or below the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines, shown in the chart below, may be eligible for either free or reduced price meals. Children who are members of households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (formerly the Food Stamp Program) or who receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) may be automatically eligible for free meals. Children who are homeless, migrant, or runaway may also be automatically eligible for free meals. Foster children, who are the legal responsibility of a welfare agency or court, are eligible for free meals regardless of the income of the household with whom they reside. Children who are members of households participating in WIC may also be eligible for free or reduced-price meals based on the household's income.

Household Size	Maximum Household Income For Free Meals	Household Income For Reduced Price Meals
1	\$16,588	\$16,588.01 - \$23,606
2	\$22,412	\$22,412.01 - \$31,894
3	\$28,236	\$28,236.01 - \$40,182
4	\$34,060	\$34,060.01 - \$48,470
5	\$39,884	\$39,884.01 - \$56,758
6	\$45,708	\$45,708.01 - \$65,046
7	\$51,532	\$51,532.01 - \$73,334
8	\$57,356	\$57,356.01 - \$81,622

Application forms are being distributed to all households with a letter informing households of the availability of free or reduced price meals for their children. Applications are also available at the principal's office in each school and at the central office. To apply for free or reduced price meals, households must only fill out one application per household and return it to the school division. Applications may be submitted at any time during the school year. The information households provide on the application will be used for determining eligibility and verification of data. Applications may be verified at any time during the school year by school or other program officials. For school officials to determine eligibility for free or reduced price benefits, households receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) only have to list their child(ren)'s name and SNAP or TANF case number and an adult household member must sign the application. Households who do not list a SNAP or TANF case number, including WIC households, must list the names of all household members, the amount and frequency of the income received by each household member, and the last four digits of the social security number of the adult household member who signs the application. If the

household member does not have a social security number, the household member must indicate that a social security number is not available. The application must be signed by an adult household member in order to be approved.

Under the provisions of the free and reduced price meal policy,

Staff of School Nutrition Services

(insert title of eligibility determining officials)

will review applications and determine eligibility. An application for free or reduced price meals cannot be approved unless it is complete. Households dissatisfied with the ruling of the eligibility determining official may wish to discuss the decision with the official on an informal basis. Households wishing to make a formal appeal for a hearing on the decision may make a request either verbally or in writing to:

Dr. Alicia Hart, 1340 Braddock Place Alexandria, VA 22314 - (703) 619-8289

(insert name, address, and telephone of the hearing official).

Households may apply for free or reduced price meals at any time during the school year. If a household is not eligible now but has a change, such as a decrease in household income, an increase in household size, becomes unemployed or qualifies for SNAP or TANF, the household should contact the school for an application. Such changes may make the children of the household eligible for benefits if the household's income falls at or below the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines.

Households that receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits (formerly the Food Stamp Program) or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) may not have to complete an application for free or reduced price student meals. School officials will determine eligibility for free meals based on documentation, obtained directly from the Virginia Department of Social Services, that a child is a member of a household currently receiving SNAP or TANF. School officials will notify these households in writing of their eligibility. Households who are notified of their eligibility, but who do not want their children to receive free meals, must contact the school. SNAP and TANF households must complete an application if they are not notified in writing of their automatic eligibility within the first 10 days of the new school year.

MEAL POLICY: Students who do not have money on account or in hand to cover the cost of a meal at the time of service will be permitted to charge a full meal. Students will not be permitted to charge a la carte items. Reasonable efforts will be used to avoid calling attention to a student's inability to pay. SNS will notify the principal daily of any unpaid meal charges. The principal's designee will then notify the parent/guardian in the parent's/guardian's preferred language. After ten (10) meals have been charged, the principal will notify the parents/guardians by U.S. mail. Written notifications will include the amount of unpaid meal charges and information on replenishing the student's meal accounts, as well as contact information for assistance registering for free and reduced meal benefits. In addition, the principal will designate a member of the school support team to schedule a meeting with the parents/guardians to determine whether the student qualifies for free and reduced meal benefits. Therefore, ACPS may notify the department of social services of suspected cases of child neglect.

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, audiotape, 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: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, 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.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.