



Date: September 14, 2020

To: Parents of All Boardman Students

From: Natalie Winkle, Food Service Director

Regarding: USDA Benefit Waiver for Free Meals

Dear Parents,

The USDA has signed an extension to the School Nutrition Program waivers in which we participate.

This means that starting on Tuesday September 14th, all meals served to Boardman students will be FREE for everyone.

No action is needed from parents in order for their student(s) to receive these free meal benefits. Students can simply come to the breakfast/lunch line and get their free meals. Contacting the Food Services Department regarding participation is not necessary.

The changes to how we are able to operate our Child Nutrition Programs under these waivers are new to us and we are still navigating how to implement these flexibilities so I ask that you stay connected and check back for updates frequently.

Visit <https://www.boardman.k12.oh.us> for the most up-to-date information.

We know that this will help many of our families and students, but we also know that these benefits are temporary. There will be a cutoff date and we will be required to return to normal operations and serve student meals at prices based on meal status (free, reduced, or full pay).

Although we are still awaiting further guidance from the Ohio Department of Education on some of the details of this change, I am passing along some answers to questions that have come up. Please read the below responses thoroughly.

Sincerely,

Natalie Winkle

Boardman Local Schools
Food Service Director
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QUESTIONS/ANSWERS

Serving Free Meals to All Students

Effective Tuesday September 14th, 2020

Question 1: When will all breakfast and lunch meals be free for all Boardman students?

- A) Starting Monday September 14th, **ALL** breakfast and lunch meals served to students will be **free of charge**.

Question 2: Who is eligible to get free breakfast and lunch?

- A) All Boardman students are able to receive free breakfast and lunch beginning Monday September 14th (the first day of school), please keep in mind the benefits can end at any time per the USDA. We will keep you informed of when the benefits end. (according to the USDA, the free meals extension will continue through Dec 31, 2020 or **until the funds are depleted**).

Question 3: How long will my student be able to receive free meals?

- A) Currently, the benefits waiver is extended through December 31 2020. However, the USDA has complete authority to end the benefits and waiver extension early and with little notice. So, at any point in time, we will have to pivot back to standard operations and charge meals at prices based on student meal benefit status (free, reduced, paid).

Question 4: Are families REQUIRED to complete a Free and Reduced price meal benefit application to get free meals starting on September 14th?

- A) No. Students can receive a free breakfast and lunch starting on September 14th without having an approved meal benefit application on file. **However, it is EXTREMELY IMPORTANT for families continue to submit free and reduced meal benefit applications as usual for three important reasons:**

1) When the USDA removes the benefit waiver, we MUST return to serving meals at the Board approved prices. Households would continue to receive free meal benefits ONLY if they are approved via an application or the Direct Certification process

2) Free and Reduced meal benefit applications are used to help our school receive academic funding for instruction and activities in the classroom.

3) The Food Service Office still needs an approved application or school fees waiver in order for students to receive free school fees, so please submit an application for meal benefits.

Please visit **www.boardman.payschools.com** to submit an application today.

Question 5: Do I need to let the Food Service Department know that I would like my student to participate in the program and receive free meals?

- A) No. Please DO NOT contact the food service department regarding participation in receiving free meals as this is an automatic change to the student's lunch account (until Dec 31, 2020)

