

September, 2011

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I welcome your child back to school and sincerely hope this year will prove to be a rewarding educational experience for him/her. The Board of Education believes that one of the most important ways in which we can help our children perform better in their classrooms is to provide them with the nutrition necessary for the healthy growth of their minds and bodies. Therefore, we provide breakfast and lunch in our schools every day.

Children need healthy meals to learn. Scotia-Glenville School District offers healthy meals every school day. Breakfast costs 75 cents in the elementary schools, and the Middle School and Sr. High School. Lunch costs \$1.65 in the elementary schools and \$1.85 in the Middle School and Sr. High School. Children from households that meet federal income guidelines (outlined below) are eligible for free meals or reduced price meals. Reduced price meals cost each eligible student 25 cents for lunch and 25 cents for breakfast. To apply for free or reduced price meals, submit a Direct Certification letter from the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance **OR** complete the enclosed application, sign it, and return it to the school as soon as possible. Please refer to the guidelines contained in this letter when completing the application. We cannot approve an application that is not complete, so be sure to fill out all required information.

- 1. Do I need to fill out an application for each child?** No. Complete the application to apply for free or reduced price meals. 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: **[name, address, phone number]**
- 2. Who can get free meals?** All children in households receiving benefits from **food stamps, the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations** or **TANF**, can get free meals regardless of your income. Also, your children can get free meals if your household's gross income is within the free limits on the Federal Eligibility Income Chart, shown on this application.
- 3. Can foster children get free meals?** Yes, foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court, are eligible for free meals. Any foster child in the household is eligible for free meals regardless of income.
- 4. Can homeless, runaway and migrant children get free meals?** Yes, children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant qualify for free meals. If you haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call or e-mail **[school]** to see if they qualify.
- 5. Who can get reduced price meals?** Your children can get low cost meals if your household income is within the reduced price limits on the Federal Income Chart, shown on this application.
- 6. Should I fill out an application if I received a letter this school year saying my children are approved for free or reduced price meals?** Please read the letter you received carefully and follow the instructions. Call the school at **[phone number]** if you have questions.
- 7. My child's application was approved last year. Do I need to fill out another one?** Yes. Your child's application is only good for that school year and for the first few days of this school year. You must send in a new application unless the school told you that your child is eligible for the new year.
- 8. I get WIC, can my child(ren) get free meals?** Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please fill out a Free/Reduced Price Meal application.
- 9. Will the information I give be checked?** Yes and we may also ask you to send written proof.
- 10. 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.
- 11. 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: *Susan Swartz, Superintendent of Schools, 900 Preddice Pkwy., Scotia, NY 12302, (518)382-1215.*
- 12. May I apply if someone in my household is not a U.S. citizen?** Yes. You or your child(ren) do not have to be a U.S. citizen to qualify for free or reduced price meals.
- 13. Who should I include as members of my household?** You must include all people living in your household, related or not (such as grandparents, other relatives, or friends) who share income and expenses. You must include yourself and all children living with you. If you live with other people who are economically independent (for example, people who you do not support, who do not share income with you or your children, and who pay a pro-rated share of expenses), do not include them.
- 14. 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 got \$900, put down that you get \$1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but not if you get it only sometimes.
- 15. We are in the military. Do we include our housing allowance as income?** If you get an off-base housing allowance, it must be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income.
- 16. My spouse is deployed to a combat zone. Is her combat pay counted as income?** No, if the combat pay is received in addition to her basic pay because of her deployment and it wasn't received before she was deployed, combat pay is not counted as income. Contact your school for more information.
- 17. My family needs more help. Are there other programs we might apply for?** To find out how to apply for food stamps or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance or call 800-342-3009.

**2011-2012 INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES
FOR FREE AND REDUCED PRICE MEALS OR FREE MILK**

REDUCED PRICE ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART

Effective from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012

Household Size	Annual	Month	Twice-Monthly	Bi-Weekly	Weekly
1.....	\$20,147	1,679	\$ 840	\$775	\$ 388
2.....	27,214	2,268	1,134	1,047	524
3.....	34,281	2,857	1,429	1,319	660
4.....	41,348	3,446	1,723	1,591	796
5.....	48,415	4,035	2,018	1,863	932
6.....	55,482	4,624	2,312	2,134	1,067
7.....	62,549	5,213	2,607	2,406	1,203
8.....	69,616	5,802	2,901	2,678	1,339
For each additional family member add	+7,067	+589	+295	+272	+136

How to Apply: To get free or reduced price meals for your children you may submit a **Direct Certification letter received from the NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, OR carefully complete one application** for your household and return it to the designated office. If you now receive food stamps, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) for any children, or participate in the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), the application must include the children's names, the household food stamp, TANF or FDPIR case number and the signature of an adult household member. All children should be listed on the same application. If you do not list a food stamp, TANF or FDPIR number for all the children for whom you are applying, the application must include the names of everyone in the household, the amount of income for each household member, and how often it is received and where it comes from. It must include the signature of an adult household member and the last four digits of that adult's social security number, or check the box if the adult does not have a social security number. An application that is not complete cannot be approved. Contact your local Department of Social Services for your food stamp or TANF case number or complete the income portion of the application.

Reporting Changes: The benefits that you are approved for at the time of application are effective for the entire school year. You no longer need to report changes for an increase in income or decrease in household size, or if you no longer receive food stamps.

Income Exclusions : The value of any child care provided or arranged, or any amount received as payment for such child care or reimbursement for costs incurred for such care under the Child Care Development (Block Grant) Fund should not be considered as income for this program.

Nondiscrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly. In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write to *USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20250-9410* or call 202-720-5964. USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Meal Service to Children With Disabilities: Federal regulations require schools and institutions to serve meals at no extra charge to children with a disability which may restrict their diet. A student with a disability is defined in 7CFR Part 15b.3 of Federal regulations, as one who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities. Major life activities are defined to include functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working. You must request the special meals from the school and provide the school with medical certification from a medical doctor. If you believe your child needs substitutions because of a disability, please get in touch with us for further information, as there is specific information that the medical certification must contain.

Confidentiality: The United States Department of Agriculture has approved the release of students names and eligibility status, without parent/guardian consent, to persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of federal education programs such as Title I and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), which are United States Department of Education programs used to determine areas such as the allocation of funds to schools, to evaluate socioeconomic status of the school's attendance area, and to assess educational progress. Information may also be released to State health or State education programs administered by the State agency or local education agency, provided the State or local education agency administers the program, and federal State or local nutrition programs similar to the National School Lunch Program. Additionally, *all* information contained in the free and reduced price application may be released to persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of programs authorized under the National School Lunch Act (NSLA) or Child Nutrition Act (CNA); including the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, the Special Milk Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC); the Comptroller General of the United States for audit purposes, and federal, State or local law enforcement officials investigating alleged violation of the programs under the NSLA or CNA.

The disclosure of eligibility information not specifically authorized by the NSLA requires a written consent statement from the parent/guardian.

We will let you know when your application is approved or denied.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Swartz
Superintendent of Schools