

Downey Unified School District

STUDENTS

MEALS FOR NEEDY PUPILS

AR 2540

All pupils who are determined by school district authorities to be in need of free or reduced-price meals shall be furnished them.

There shall be no discrimination in the furnishing of free or reduced-price meals because of race, religion, source of income, or for any other reason.

The names of pupils determined to be eligible for free or reduced-price meals will not be published, posted, or announced in any manner to other children. The eligibility status of individual students may be provided to staff designated by the Superintendent for use in completing district, state or federal reports or testing data collection. Children receiving free or reduced-price meals shall not be required, as a condition of receiving such service, to use a separate lunchroom, go through a separate serving line, enter the lunchroom through a separate entrance, eat lunch at a different time, use a different medium of exchange, or eat a different meal than paying pupils.

The system in each of the various schools for collecting from paying pupils and accounting for free or reduced-price meals shall be such that the anonymity of pupils receiving free or reduced-price meals will be protected in the lunchroom, classroom, or other environ of the attendance unit.

In determining the relative needs of pupils to receive free or reduced-price meals, consideration shall be given to the following principles:

1. Meals will be served free or on a reduced-price basis to children from families whose income is at or below the "U.S.D.A. Income Eligibility Guidelines for Free and Reduced-Price Meals."
2. Any family that enrolls a child after the start of the school year will receive the letter or notice to parents and an application form.

Procedures

1. For meal applications submitted at the school site, the Food Service Supervisor at each school shall be responsible for initiating the screening process in accordance with District policy.

Downey Unified School District

STUDENTS

MEALS FOR NEEDY PUPILS - continued

AR 2540

Procedures - continued

2. Application forms for free or reduced-price meals shall be used for all students being considered for free or reduced-price meals. These forms will be sent home with the student on or about the beginning of each school year; however, a family shall be permitted to file an application at any time during the school year. Applications are accepted at each school kitchen. New student applications are screened and given a preliminary eligibility as designated by the school site food service designee. All applications are officially processed at the Food Services Department and stored securely. Once the application is processed, the Food Service Department will send a written notice of eligibility or denial to all households who apply for the Meal Program.
3. Children's eligibility for free or reduced-price meals will be based on the "U.S.D.A. Income Eligibility Guidelines for Free and Reduced-price Meals." If changes occur during the year the scale will be brought up to date and announced to the public.
4. In order to protect the anonymity of those students receiving free or reduced-price service the following system shall be used:

A pin number, which is used for meals, shall be issued by the cafeteria personnel. All students, regardless of their socio-economic status, shall have an anonymous pin number.
5. Parents of students who are denied a request for free or reduced-price meals may appeal through the Director, Food Services. Appeals may be originated by making an oral or written request for a hearing; and parents may request the aid of others, including an attorney, in presenting the appeal.

The hearing will be conducted by, and the decision made by, a hearing official who did not participate in making the decision under appeal.

Publicity

Parents shall be informed of the school's free or reduced-price meals policy by means of a letter or a notice distributed to all parents on or about the beginning of each school term. Such letter or notice shall contain the following information:

Downey Unified School District

STUDENTS

MEALS FOR NEEDY PUPILS - continued

AR 2540

Publicity - continued

1. The specific criteria used in the school eligibility standards.
2. How a family applies for a free or reduced-price meal for their children.
3. How a family may file an appeal for an adjustment in the decision of the school authority with respect to such application.

A news release containing the same information shall be made available on or about the beginning of each school term to the information media in the area from which the school draws its attendance. Copies of the news release will be made available upon request to anyone interested. Any subsequent change in a school's eligibility standards during the school term that is approved by the State agency shall be publicly announced in the same manner as the original standards were announced. Additionally, meal application and instructions are posted on the Food Service Department's website.

Financing

The cost of free or reduced-price meals for needy students shall be paid from Federal/State subsidies.

Every effort shall be made to obtain maximum funding from the State and Federal Government for the reimbursement of costs for free or reduced-price services to qualified needy students.

It is not the intent of these rules and regulations to discourage parent-teacher organizations from contributing to the welfare and meals of needy children.

Confidentiality

There shall be no public release of information regarding individual participation in any free or reduced price meal program. Information regarding student participation in the free or reduced price meal program is not to be maintained in the permanent record of any student. Only the student's eligibility status may be shared for the purpose of desegregation of academic achievement data. All other information (family size, income, Social Security number, etc.) is confidential.