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For Immediate Release

Public Media Release for Free & Reduced School Meals

Every child needs a healthy, nutritious meal to learn. Pembroke Public Schools offers nutritious meals to children each school day, often at a free or reduced price for those who need it. Pembroke Public Schools participate in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program (NSLBP), a federally funded program that helps children receive free or reduced meals.

Does my family qualify?

More families qualify than you may think. To find out if your family qualifies, please complete our online application in School Office Pro at

<https://pembroke.schoolofficepro.com/parentportal/pages/login.aspx>. To obtain a paper application form, visit http://www.pembrokek12.org/pages/PembrokePS/Departments/Food_Service/General_Info and click on Forms and Information, then the Free & Reduced Application. Paper copies are also available in the main office of any Pembroke Public School. All applications are available August 1st.

Directions are included on the application. Only one application is required per family. To apply for free or reduced price meals, households should fill out only one application for all children in their household and return it to the main office of their school, their cafeteria, or forward it directly to the Foodservices Manager at 72 Pilgrim Road, Pembroke, MA 02359. Incomplete applications will be denied and a letter will be sent to the mailing address provided on the application. Parent/guardian is responsible for all charges made on the account until the application has been approved, regardless of new status. The information provided on the application will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and may be verified at any time during the school year by school officials. Once approved, meal benefits are good for an entire school year and for up to 30 operating days into the new school year as eligibility from the previous school year will continue with the program. When the carry-over period ends, unless the household is notified that their children are directly certified or the household submits an application that is approved, the children must pay full price for school meals.

Households that receive SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), (formerly the food stamp program) or TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) will receive a letter automatically approving individual children for free breakfast/lunch through the Direct Certification Program. If a household that receives SNAP or TANF does not receive an automatic approval notice, the household should contact the Foodservices Manager for Pembroke Public Schools. For any child not listed on the eligibility notice, the household should contact the Foodservices Manager for Pembroke Public Schools to have free meal benefits extended to that child(ren) or should submit an income application and return it to the main office of their school, their cafeteria, or forward it directly to the Foodservices

Manager at 72 Pilgrim Road, Pembroke, MA 02359. If you do not want your child(ren) to have free meals, please notify the Pembroke Public Schools in writing of your request.

Student meal accounts are private and confidential with personal ID numbers. Our POS systems allow all students to use the same payment method—such as name or personal identification number. No cash is needed because parents or students may prepay their meals online via www.myschoolbucks.com, at any cafeteria register, or by forwarding a check or money order to the Foodservices Manager. For this reason, POS systems are thought of as mechanisms to decrease overt identification of students' status; since all students are using the same payment method, they are indistinguishable from each other when they pay for meals.

When known to the school district, households will be notified of any child's eligibility for free meals if the individual child is Other Source Categorically Eligible because the child is categorized as homeless, migrant, or runaway as defined by law.

A foster child is categorically eligible for free meals and may be included as a member of the foster family if the foster family chooses to also apply for benefits for other children. By including children in foster care as household members, it may help other children in the household qualify for meal benefits.

Categorical eligibility for free meals is extended to all children in a household when the application lists an Assistance Program's case number for any household member.

Households with any member who is currently certified to receive Assistance Program benefits may submit an application for these children with the abbreviated information as indicated on the application and instructions.

Households with children who are categorically eligible under Other Source Categorically Eligible Programs should contact the school for assistance in receiving benefits and must mark the relevant box on the application.

Children of parents or guardians who become unemployed any time during the school year may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Families could apply for benefits any time during the school year.

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) participants may be eligible for free or reduced price meals.

A household may appeal the decision of the School District with respect to the application using the hearing procedure described in the free and reduced price policy statement.

If your family income is at or below the proceeding chart, you may qualify for free or reduced priced meals.

FEDERAL ELIGIBILITY INCOME CHART For School Year 2018-2019			
Household size	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly
1	\$22,459	\$1,872	\$432
2	30,451	2,538	586
3	38,443	3,204	740
4	46,435	3,870	893
5	54,427	4,536	1,047
6	62,419	5,202	1,201
7	70,411	5,868	1,355
8	78,403	6,534	1,508
Each additional person:	+7,992	+666	+154

Free or reduced meals applications require only the last four digits of the social security number of the adult household member signing the application.

If you have trouble completing your school meal application or have additional questions, please feel free to contact Nadine Doucette, Foodservices Manager at 339-244-5045 or Nadine.doucette@pembrokek12.org for guidance.

Non-Discrimination Statement: This explains what to do if you believe you have been treated unfairly.

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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotope, 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:

mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture

Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

fax: (202) 690-7442; or email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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