



August 2011

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Thomaston Public Schools offers a variety of healthy meals each school day. Children may buy lunch for \$2.50 (Black Rock School), \$2.50 (Center School), or \$2.75 (Thomaston High School). Children who qualify under U.S. Department of Agriculture guidelines may receive meals free or at a reduced price of \$0.40 for lunch. All meals served must meet the nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. If a child has a disability (as determined by a doctor) and the disability prevents the child from eating the regular school meal, the school will make substitutions as prescribed by the doctor. There will be no extra charge for the meal if a substitution is required. Please contact the school for further information.

1. **Do I need to complete 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 incomplete, so be sure to complete all required information. Return the completed application to: **Christine Wallace, EDUCATION CONNECTION, 355 Goshen Road, P.O. Box 909, Litchfield, CT 06759-0909.**
2. **Who can receive free meals?** All children in households receiving benefits from the Special Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Family Assistance (TFA), and most foster children can receive free meals regardless of your income. Also, your child(ren) can receive free meals if your household's gross income is within the free limits listed in the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines. Households with children enrolled in the Head Start/Even Start Program should contact the school for assistance in receiving benefits. **Note:** Subsidized adoptions and subsidized guardianships are not automatically eligible for free meals. These require the calculation of all household income plus the adoption/guardianship subsidy.
3. **Can homeless and runaway children receive free meals?** If you have not been informed that your child(ren) will receive free meals, please call or e-mail **[Thomaston Public Schools, Nancy Schyner (860) 283-4796]** to see if they qualify.
4. **Who can receive reduced price meals?** Your child(ren) can receive low cost meals if your household income is within the reduced price limits listed in the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines.
5. **Should I complete an application if I received a letter this school year stating that my child(ren) are approved for free meals?** Please read the letter you received carefully and follow the instructions. If you have questions, contact Caterina Colao at EDUCATION CONNECTION at 860-567-0863 ex 128.
6. **My child(ren)'s application was approved last year. Do I need to complete another one?** Yes. Your child's application is only good for the previous school year and for the first 30 days of this school year. You must submit a new application prior to October 14, 2011 or your benefits will expire.
7. **I receive WIC. Can my child(ren) receive free meals?** Children in households participating in WIC may be eligible for free or reduced price meals. Please complete an application.
8. **Will the information I provide be checked?** Yes, and we may also ask you to submit written proof.
9. **If I don't qualify now, may I apply later?** Yes, you may apply at any time during the school year.
10. **What if I disagree with the school's decision regarding my application?** You should speak with your school officials. You may also request a hearing by writing to or calling: Lynda Mitchell, Superintendent, Thomaston Public Schools, 158 Main Street, Thomaston, CT 06787, (860) 283-9513.
11. **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 U.S. citizens to qualify for free or reduced price meals.

12. **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). You must include yourself and all children living with you.
13. **What if my income is not always the same?** List the amount of pay that you normally receive. For example, if you normally make \$1000 each month, but missed some work last month and only made \$900, write down that you made \$1000 per month. If you normally receive overtime, include it; but do not include it if you only work overtime occasionally.
14. **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.
15. **My spouse is deployed to a combat zone. Is his/her combat pay counted as income?** No. If the combat pay is received in addition to his/her basic pay because of his/her deployment and it was not received before he/she was deployed, combat pay is not counted as income. Contact your school for more information.
16. **My family needs more help. Are there other programs for which we might apply?** Your child and family *may* be eligible for SNAP benefits if your child is determined to be eligible for free meals. For information regarding SNAP and/or to contact the Department of Social Services' office in your town, call the United Way's free referral number at **2-1-1** (the call is free, statewide).
17. **Will information on my application be kept confidential?** We will use the information on your application to decide if your child should receive free or reduced price meals. We may inform officials connected with Title I and the National Assessment of Educational Progress if your child is eligible for free or reduced price school meals. They will use this information for funding and/or evaluation purposes. Information may also be disclosed if you want the application to be used to get other benefits.
18. **Can I receive other benefits (such as health insurance) for my child?** Your child may be eligible for HUSKY (a health insurance program for children). Please refer to the attached addendum for additional benefits.

We will let you know if you are approved or denied.

Sincerely,

Christine Wallace
Food Service Director
EDUCATION CONNECTION