PELHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT

59A Marsh Road, Pelham, NH 03076

SCHOOL YEAR 2026-2027

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FREE AND REDUCED-PRICE SCHOOL MEALS UNDER THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA) NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM (NSLP)

Dear Parent/Guardian:
Pelham School District offers healthy meals every school day under the USDA National School Lunch Program. Breakfast at all schools is $2.30. Lunch price at Pelham Elementary is $3.55, Pelham Memorial is $3.65, and Pelham High School is $3.90. Your children may qualify for free meals or for reduced-price meals under this program. If your household qualifies for reduced-priced meals, Breakfast would be at no cost, and lunch would be priced at $0.40. Below are some common questions and answers to aid in the process of determining your child's eligibility.

Meal Charge Policy
For students in Grades 6-8, when the meal account is past due for 4 meals, the student will be offered an alternative meal until the account is paid in full. For students in Grades 9-12, when the meal account is past due for 2 meals, the student will be offered an alternative meal until the account is paid in full. These students will also not be allowed to charge a la carte or extra entrée items. In accordance with state law, the alternative meal will be one of the meal choices generally available to all students. If the student's meal account balance debt grows to $15.00 or more a letter requiring immediate payment shall be sent by email or US Mail to the parent or the parent shall be contacted by the Principal or designee by phone or in person.

1. WHO CAN GET FREE OR REDUCED PRICE MEALS?
    - All children in households receiving benefits from **NH SNAP** or **NH TANF**, are eligible for free meals.
    - Foster children that are under the legal responsibility of a foster care agency or court are eligible for free meals.
    - Children participating in their school's Head Start program are eligible for free meals.
    - Children who meet the definition of homeless, runaway, or migrant are eligible for free meals.
    - Children may receive free or reduced-price meals if your household's income is within the limits set by the Federal Income Eligibility Guidelines in the chart below.

Income Guidelines for Child Nutrition Programs: July 1, 2026, to June 30, 2027

Household size	Annual	Monthly	Twice per month	Every two weeks	Weekly
1	29,526	2,461	1,231	1,136	568
2	40,034	3,337	1,669	1,540	770
3	50,542	4,212	2,106	1,944	972
4	61,050	5,088	2,544	2,349	1,175
5	71,558	5,964	2,982	2,753	1,377
6	82,066	6,839	3,420	3,157	1,579
7	92,574	7,715	3,858	3,561	1,781
8	103,082	8,591	4,296	3,965	1,983
For each additional family member, add	10,508	876	438	405	203

2. How DO I KNOW IF MY CHILD(REN) QUALIFY AS HOMELESS, MIGRANT, OR RUNAWAY?
    - Do the members of your household lack a permanent address? Are you staying together in a shelter, hotel, or other temporary housing arrangement? Does your family relocate on a seasonal basis? Are any children living with you who have chosen to leave their prior family or household? If you believe children in your household meet these descriptions and haven't been told your children will get free meals, please call or e-**mail Sarah Marandos, Assistant Superintendent and Local Homeless Liaison for the Pelham School District, smarandos@pelhamsd.org or call 603-635-1145 x5005.**
3. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT AN APPLICATION FOR EACH CHILD?
    - No. *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: **Jennifer Donovan, Nutrition Services Director, at jdonovan@pelhamsd.org or call 603-635-7384 x4001.**
4. SHOULD I FILL OUT AN APPLICATION IF I RECEIVED A LETTER THIS SCHOOL YEAR SAYING MY CHILD(REN) ARE ALREADY APPROVED FOR FREE MEALS?
    - No, but please read the letter you got carefully and follow the instructions. If any children in your household were missing from your eligibility notification, contact **Jennifer Donovan, Nutrition Services Director, at jdonovan@pelhamsd.org or call 603-635-7384 x4001** immediately.
5. CAN I APPLY ONLINE?
    - Yes! You are encouraged to complete an online application instead of a paper application if you are able. The online application has the same requirements and will ask you for the same information as the paper application. Visit https://linqconnect.com/public/meal-application/new to begin or to learn more about the online application process. Contact **Jennifer Donovan, Nutrition Services Director, at jdonovan@pelhamsd.org or call 603-635-7384 x4001** if you have any questions about the online application.
6. MY APPLICATION WAS APPROVED LAST YEAR. DO I NEED TO FILL OUT A NEW ONE?
    - Yes. The 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 has informed you that your child is eligible for the new school year.
7. 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 apply for meals through the income application.
8. WILL THE INFORMATION I GIVE BE CHECKED?
    - Yes. We may also ask you to send written proof of the household income you report.
9. 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 become unemployed may become eligible for free and reduced-price meals if the household income drops below the income limit.
10. 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: **Toni Barkdoll, Director of Human Resources, email: Tbarkdoll@pelhamsd.org or call 603-635-1145 x5005.**

11. CAN I APPLY IF SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD IS NOT A U.S. CITIZEN?
    - Yes. You, your children, or other household members do not have to be U.S. citizens to apply for free or reduced-price meals.

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 made $900, put down that you made $1000 per month. If you normally get overtime, include it, but do not include it if you only work overtime sometimes. If you have lost a job or had your hours or wages reduced, use your current income.

12. WHAT IF SOME HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS HAVE NO INCOME TO REPORT?
    - Household members may not receive some types of income we ask you to report on the application or may not receive income at all. Whenever this happens, please write a 0 in the field. However, if any income fields are left empty or blank, those will also be counted as zero. Please be careful when leaving income fields blank, as we will assume you meant to do so.
13. WE ARE IN THE MILITARY; DO WE REPORT OUR INCOME DIFFERENTLY?
    - Your basic pay and cash bonus must be reported as income. If you get any cash value allowances for off-base housing, food, or clothing, or receive Family Subsistence Supplemental Allowance payments, it must also be included as income. However, if your housing is part of the Military Housing Privatization Initiative, do not include your housing allowance as income. Any additional combat pay resulting from deployment is also excluded from income.
14. WHAT IF THERE ISN'T ENOUGH SPACE ON THE APPLICATION FOR MY FAMILY?
    - List any additional household members on a separate piece of paper and attach it to your application. Contact **Jennifer Donovan, Nutrition Services Director, at jdonovan@pelhamsd.org or call 603-635-7384 x4001** to receive a second application.
15. MY FAMILY NEEDS MORE HELP, ARE THERE OTHER PROGRAMS WE MIGHT APPLY FOR?
    - To find out how to apply for **SNAP, TANF, FDPIR** or other assistance benefits, contact your local assistance office or call **603 271-9700 or 844-275-3447**.

If you have other questions or need help, call **603-635-7384 x4001**

Sincerely,

Jennifer J Donovan
Jennifer Donovan, Director of School Nutrition

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.