

Food and Nutrition Service, USDA

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all documents submitted by the household for the purpose of confirming eligibility, reproductions of those documents, or annotations made by the determining official which indicate which documents were submitted by the household and the date of submission. All relevant correspondence between the households selected for verification and the school or school food authority must be retained. School food authorities are encouraged to collect and report any or all verification data elements before the required dates.

(d) *Nondiscrimination.* The verification efforts shall be applied without regard to race, sex, color, national origin, age, or disability.

(e) *Adverse action.* If verification activities fail to confirm eligibility for free or reduced price benefits or should the household fail to cooperate with verification efforts, the school or School Food Authority shall reduce or terminate benefits, as applicable, as follows: Ten days advance notification shall be provided to households that are to receive a reduction or termination of benefits, prior to the actual reduction or termination. The first day of the 10 day advance notice period shall be the day the notice is sent. The notice shall advise the household of:

(1) The change; (2) the reasons for the change; (3) notification of the right to appeal and when the appeal must be filed to ensure continued benefits while awaiting a hearing and decision; (4) instructions on how to appeal; and (5) the right to reapply at any time during the school year. The reasons for ineligibility shall be properly documented and retained on file at the School Food Authority.

(Sec. 803, Pub. L. 97-35, 95 Stat. 521-535 (42 U.S.C. 1758))

[48 FR 12510, Mar. 25, 1983, as amended at 49 FR 26034, June 26, 1984; 52 FR 19275, May 22, 1987; 55 FR 19240, May 9, 1990; 56 FR 32950, July 17, 1991; 56 FR 33861, July 24, 1991; 64 FR 50744, Sept. 20, 1999; 64 FR 72474, Dec. 28, 1999; 66 FR 48328, Sept. 20, 2001; 68 FR 53489, Sept. 11, 2003]

§ 245.7 Hearing procedure for families and School Food Authorities.

(a) Each School Food Authority of a school participating in the National School Lunch Program, School Break-

fast Program or the Special Milk Program or of a commodity only school shall establish a hearing procedure under which:

(1) A family can appeal from a decision made by the School Food Authority with respect to an application the family has made for free or reduced price meals or for free milk, and (2) the School Food Authority can challenge the continued eligibility of any child for a free or reduced price meal or for free milk. The hearing procedure shall provide for both the family and the School Food Authority:

(i) A simple, publicly announced method to make an oral or written request for a hearing;

(ii) An opportunity to be assisted or represented by an attorney or other person;

(iii) An opportunity to examine, prior to and during the hearing, any documents and records presented to support the decision under appeal;

(iv) That the hearing shall be held with reasonable promptness and convenience, and that adequate notice shall be given as to the time and place of the hearing;

(v) An opportunity to present oral or documentary evidence and arguments supporting a position without undue interference;

(vi) An opportunity to question or refute any testimony or other evidence and to confront and cross-examine any adverse witnesses;

(vii) That the hearing shall be conducted and the decision made by a hearing official who did not participate in making the decision under appeal or in any previously held conference;

(viii) That the decision of the hearing official shall be based on the oral and documentary evidence presented at the hearing and made a part of the hearing record;

(ix) That the parties concerned and any designated representative shall be notified in writing of the decision of the hearing official;

(x) That a written record shall be prepared with respect to each hearing, which shall include the challenge or the decision under appeal, any documentary evidence and a summary of any oral testimony presented at the

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hearing, the decision of the hearing official, including the reasons therefor, and a copy of the notification to the parties concerned of the decision of the hearing official; and

(xi) That the written record of each hearing shall be preserved for a period of 3 years and shall be available for examination by the parties concerned or their representatives at any reasonable time and place during that period.

(b) *Continuation of benefits.* When a household disagrees with an adverse action which affects its benefits and requests a fair hearing, benefits shall be continued as follows while the household awaits the hearing and decision:

(1) Households that have been approved for benefits and that are subject to a reduction or termination of benefits later in the same school year shall receive continued benefits if they appeal the adverse action within the 10 day advance notice period; and

(2) Households that are denied benefits upon application shall not receive benefits.

(44 U.S.C. 3506; sec. 803, Pub. L. 97-35, 95 Stat. 521-535 (42 U.S.C. 1758))

[Amdt. 6, 39 FR 30339, Aug. 22, 1974, as amended at 47 FR 746, Jan. 7, 1982; 48 FR 12511, Mar. 25, 1983]

§ 245.8 Nondiscrimination practices for children eligible to receive free and reduced price meals and free milk.

School Food Authorities of schools participating in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program or Special Milk Program or of commodity only schools shall take all actions that are necessary to insure compliance with the following nondiscrimination practices for children eligible to receive free and reduced price meals or free milk:

(a) The names of the children shall not be published, posted or announced in any manner;

(b) There shall be no overt identification of any of the children by the use of special tokens or tickets or by any other means;

(c) The children shall not be required to work for their meals or milk;

(d) The children shall not be required to use a separate dining area, go through a separate serving line, enter

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the dining area through a separate entrance or consume their meals or milk at a different time;

(e) When more than one lunch or breakfast or type of milk is offered which meets the requirements prescribed in § 210.10, § 210.15a, § 220.8 or § 215.2(1) of this chapter, the children shall have the same choice of meals or milk that is available to those children who pay the full price for their meal or milk.

[Amdt. 6, 39 FR 30339, Aug. 22, 1974]

§ 245.9 Special assistance certification and reimbursement alternatives.

(a) *Provision 1.* A School Food Authority of a school having at least 80 percent of its enrolled children determined eligible for free or reduced price meals may, at its option, authorize the school to reduce annual certification and public notification for those children eligible for *free meals* to once every two consecutive school years. This alternative shall be known as provision 1 and the following requirements shall apply:

(1) A School Food Authority of a school operating under provision 1 requirements shall publicly notify in accordance with § 245.5, parents of enrolled children who are receiving free meals once every two consecutive school years, and shall publicly notify in accordance with § 245.5, parents of all other enrolled children on an annual basis.

(2) The 80 percent enrollment eligibility for this alternative shall be based on the school's March enrollment data of the previous school year, or on other comparable data.

(3) A School Food Authority of a school operating under provision 1, shall count the number of free, reduced price and paid meals served to children in that school as the basis for monthly reimbursement claims.

(b) *Provision 2.* A school food authority may certify children for free and reduced price meals for up to 4 consecutive school years in the schools which serve meals at no charge to all enrolled children; provided that public notification and eligibility determinations are in accordance with § 245.5 and § 245.3, respectively, during the base year as defined in paragraph (b)(6) of this section.