



Procedure for Filing a Complaint – School Lunch Program

Purpose

This procedure provides a clear and consistent process for addressing concerns or complaints related to the school lunch program, including matters involving food service, program access, and potential discrimination under the USDA's Civil Rights regulations.

Who Can File a Complaint?

Any individual—including students, parents, guardians, or staff—may file a complaint if they believe:

- They or someone they know has been treated unfairly in relation to the school lunch program.
 - There is an issue related to food service quality, access, or customer service.
 - There is suspected discrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.
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Steps for Filing a Complaint

Step 1: Submit the Complaint

Complaints can be submitted:

- In **writing** using the official **School Lunch Complaint Form** (available in the office and online).
- **Verbally** to any school administrator or food service staff.
- **Anonymously**, though this may limit the investigation.

Include the following details if possible:

- Date and location of incident
- Names of individuals involved

- Description of the concern or incident
- Any witnesses or evidence
- Desired resolution

Step 2: Receipt and Documentation

- All complaints will be documented and logged in the **School Lunch Complaint Log**.
- If the complaint alleges **discrimination**, it must be forwarded to the **Indiana Department of Education** and/or **USDA** within **5 calendar days**.

Step 3: Investigation

- The Food Service Manager and/or School Administrator will investigate the complaint promptly.
- Investigations may include reviewing documentation, interviewing staff and witnesses, and inspecting relevant areas or records.

Step 4: Resolution

- A written or verbal response will be provided to the complainant within **10 school days** when possible.
- If further investigation is needed, the complainant will be informed of the timeline.

Step 5: Referral (if needed)

- If the complaint involves a **Civil Rights issue**, it will be referred directly to:

USDA Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

Email: program.intake@usda.gov

Online form: <https://www.usda.gov/oascr/how-to-file-a-program-discrimination-complaint>

Confidentiality

All complaints will be handled confidentially to the extent possible. No individual will face retaliation or adverse consequences for submitting a complaint.

Recordkeeping

Complaint forms and logs will be maintained for **three years plus the current year** in accordance with federal and state regulations.