

Maine Department of Education

Child Nutrition

*Reimagining a "new"
Food Service Department
Ideas and Considerations
for Fall 2020*



Child Nutrition has collected comments from local districts, the CDC, the Restaurant Association and other stakeholders to assemble a list of ideas and considerations for local programs when developing a plan for returning to school in the fall. This is a draft list of ideas and considerations.

Plans developed locally will depend on the community, county, school size, CDC recommendations and other considerations. This is not intended to be a plan but rather a list to guide you in developing a plan. This document will change as science and other markers require.



This document pertains to all Child Nutrition Programs: School Breakfast Program, National School Lunch Program (NSLP), Afterschool Snack, Child and Adult Care Food Program-At Risk (CACFP-At Risk), and Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP).

**The document is divided
into the following:**

General:

Which applies to all scenarios listed

Fall:

Return to onsite academic learning

Fall:

Delayed start

Return:

to school buildings
in the fall but disrupted

General

Social distancing requirements, physical barriers between students and food/nutrition staff:

- Barriers can be useful in kitchens, food pickup areas, and at cash registers where maintaining a physical distance of at least 6 feet is difficult.
- Use space markings on the floor to ensure students are waiting 6 feet apart during service. Markings could be the school mascot, images of different foods or any fun and creative image.
- Space tables, both preparation and dining, at least 6 feet apart.
- Masks/face shields, and all appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for food service workers should be utilized.
- Implement smaller dining environments by students eating in classrooms or break out rooms. Divide up the cafeteria with temporary walls such as rolling dividers.
- Stagger and limit dining times to minimize the number of customers in the cafeteria/meal pick-up area.
- Rotate or stagger shifts to limit the number of employees in the kitchen at the same time.
- Limit number of employees in food storage or walk in areas.
- Keep non-essential activities out of the cafeteria and kitchen.
- Delivery people should not be allowed in spaces where the 6' rule cannot be applied.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (e.g., door handles, cash registers, touch screens, pens & pencils, workstations, sink handles, bath room stalls) at least daily, or more frequently, if possible and as required by food safety requirements. Clean shared objects (e.g. payment terminals, tables, countertops/bars, receipt trays, condiment holders) between each use.
- Train staff on proper cleaning and disinfection techniques and establish a plan or routine to ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants.
- Limit any sharing of food, tools, equipment, or supplies by staff members.
- Remind staff to stay home if feeling sick (follow CDC guidelines).
- Conduct daily health checks – temperature and health screenings.
- Promote healthy hygiene practices, and stock adequate supplies to support hygiene practices (hand sanitizer, paper towels, etc.).
- A hand sanitizer should be setup as people enter cafeteria and kitchen.
- Establish a roster of trained backup staff.
- Install vending machines with reimbursable meals.
- Install a kiosk in the lobby for students to order meals.
- Provide an online option for ordering meals.
- Provide and promote the use of online meal benefit applications (however, a paper version must still be offered).
- Encourage hand washing for all staff and students prior to meal service.
- Encourage air hugs, with air hug stickers.
- Provide and promote online payments in lieu of cash/check payments.
- Have a plan should a positive COVID case be identified, following CDC guidance.

General Expense Considerations

- Personal Protective Equipment
- Cleaning and disinfecting products
- Packaging/Unitized meal containers (bags, boxes, etc.)
- Additional staffing costs
- Signage
- Tray sealers
- Label maker (online ordering)
- Trash receptacles: classrooms, hallways, gym, and outside
- Equipment: POS system, coolers, mobile carts, ice packs
- Plexiglass barriers
- Increased food costs
- Increased labor costs

Scenario 1: Back to School in the Fall

Full Time on-site

- Nutrition staff will plate food, physical barriers between students and food/nutrition staff will be installed.
- Unitized meals are delivered to the classroom.
- Place meal carts in different locations of the building to help with social distancing. Consider the use of the salad bar space.
- If serving meals from carts, meal choices may be limited.
- Multiple serving locations means more places to clean and sanitize.
- A/B lunch in cafeteria and classrooms - alternate weeks when students eat in cafeteria and classroom.
- Remove common table items ketchup bottles, dressing, etc. and replace with single service type items.
- Students go in shifts to the cafeteria; one student through the line at a time.
- Limit food options to move students more quickly. Consider promoting offerings early in the day to help students make their choice.
- Students are called down to the cafeteria by classroom to get their food and take it back to the classroom.
- Suspend share table.
- Suspend self-service bars.
- Distribute meals/eat outside (when weather is appropriate).
- Eat in the gymnasium for greater spacing.
- Evaluate sanitation factors of paper and disposal items vs. trays washed and sanitized in the dishwasher.
- Staff issues – do you need more labor hours? Consider reassignment of duties? Do you need fewer labor hours?
- Have a plan for free, safe potable water options for customers.
- Offer online ordering.
- Consider classroom meal pre-orders.
- Once a food service plan is established, provide training.

Part Time (Half Day on-site)

In addition to the considerations listed under 'Full time on site':

- Half days are considered full school days when lunch is offered.
- Create a plan for serving both onsite and offsite meals.
- Provide clear instruction that if signing up for offsite meals, paid students will be charged if they take a meal. Not all meals are provided at no charge.
- This option may require more staff or shift work.
- Will changing staff hours conflict with union contracts?
- There are food safety concerns for meals taken home.
- Parents are going to have to be able to work from home to combat childcare shortages. Therefore, meals will be needed.

Split Weeks (one week on-site, one week off-site)

- If offering bulk meals, consider "Opting in" - to be delivered bulk meals, opt in must be in writing, paid families need to know they will be charged.
- USDA foods are mostly frozen for hot meals not intended for take home or bulk meals.

Scenario 2: Delayed On-Site School Start Continue Summer Food Service Program

- **A delayed year start delayed date for the 30 operating day carryover of eligibility for student applications.**
- Consider how/when applications for NSLP will be collected? Paper vs. online
- Ensure proper meal accountability for SFSP via tick sheets for site eligible locations.
- Provide training for staff in the different meal service types National School Lunch, Summer Food Service Program and Child and Adult Care Food Program.

Continuation of the Summer Food Service Program Will Require

- NEO to be modified so summer months beyond August can be claimed.
- Site info sheets end date will need to be modified.
- When would student applications be collected?

Scenario 3: Back to school on-site, but disrupted OR, blended learning model

Back to school on-site, but one school is still remote learning

How to feed students safely in school buildings:

- Nutrition staff will plate food, physical barriers between students and food/nutrition staff will be installed.
- Unitized meals are delivered to the classroom.
- Place meal carts in different locations of the building to help with social distancing. Consider the use of the salad bar space.
- If serving meals from carts, meal choices may be limited.
- Multiple serving locations means more places to clean and sanitize.
- A/B lunch in cafeteria and classrooms - alternate weeks when students eat in cafeteria and classroom.
- Remove common table items ketchup bottles, dressing, etc. and replace with single service type items.
- Students go in shifts to the cafeteria; one student through the line at a time.
- Limit food options to move students more quickly. Consider promoting offerings early in the day to help students make their choice.
- Students are called down to the cafeteria by classroom to get their food and take it back to the classroom.
- Suspend share table.
- Suspend self-service bars.
- Distribute meals/eat outside (when weather is appropriate).
- Consider Eat in the gymnasium for greater spacing.
- Evaluate sanitation factors of paper and disposal items vs. trays washed and sanitized in the dishwasher.
- Staff issues – do you need more labor hours? Consider reassignment of duties? Do you need fewer labor hours?
- Have a plan for free, safe potable water options for customers.
- Offer online ordering.
- Offer pre-ordering for classroom meals.
- Once a food service plan is established, provide training.

How to feed the students safely if a building(s) closure occurs?

- Use the SFSP Unanticipated School Closure Model.
- Use NSLP Non-Congregate Feeding.
- Offer Curbside meal service.
- Offer unitized meals vs. bulk meals for several days, family puts each meal together.
- Offer mobile delivery of meals to students learning remotely.
- Offer parent/student pick up weekly “grocery bag” with menu for the week (assembly required).

Student Health

- Limit meal service lines to one person at a time.
- Post signs to inform students of the new food pick up protocols.
- Food service worker enters student pin at the POS (limiting repeated use).
- Strongly encourage parents to pay online.
- Disinfect commonly touched areas between meal shifts.
- Provide touchless water bottle filling stations.
- Stagger recess.
- Hand hygiene stations should be set up at the entrance of the facility, cafeteria, classroom, so that children can clean their hands before they enter.
- Provide student access to sinks in/near classroom to wash hands. (No bathroom passes).

Staff Health

- Work in teams, the same people together every day (In school vs. out of school teams of Food Prep/Food Bagging).
- Stagger employee hours to account for less employees in a small space and the possibility of a longer school day.

Mental Health

- Physical guides to determine social distancing (6ft) apart should be child friendly... i.e. a lady bug sticker on the floor every six feet, fun/colorful face masks.
- Ensure open communication with students regarding changes to ease their transition.
- Provide TV screens to promote the meal option for the day.
- Collaborate with classroom staff to schedule meal themed weeks.
- Child Nutrition Staff are encouraged to take breaks; provide posters of resources available to staff.
- Try to continue to make connections with students, participate in morning Zoom announcements to classrooms- i.e. "today/tomorrows meal options are.... "

Public Health

- Establish a communication system for staff and parents for meals, closings, sickness, etc
- Use the same system used for school snow day closings.
- Send flyers home to parents.

Transportation

- Utilize the same buses transporting students and food

Training

- Ongoing training will be needed on new procedures and safety measures.
- Training and expectations need to be enforced.

All Schools In District Are Remote Learning

How to feed students safely?

- Use the SFSP Unanticipated School Closure Model.
- Use NSLP Non-Congregate Feeding.
- Offer curbside meal service
- Offer unitized meals vs. bulk meals for several days, family puts each meal together.
- Offer mobile delivery of meals to students learning remotely.
- Offer parent/student pick up weekly “grocery bag” with menu for the week (assembly required).

Student Health

- Send reminders of the CDC recommendations for Health and safety including frequent washing hands, physical distancing, covering cough...etc. via email and social media.

Staff Health

- When working in teams, work with the same people every day (in school vs. out of school teams of food prep/food bagging).
- Stagger employee hours to account for less employees in a small space and the possibility of a longer school day.
- Create a plan for back-up staff, if needed.

Mental Health

- Post social media and email CDC recommendations for mental health.
- Provide posters for employees regarding options available for them.
- Watch for staff burn out.
- Encourage a team atmosphere.

Public Health

- Establish a communication system for staff and parents for meals, closings, sickness etc.

Learning

- Participate in school announcements via Zoom every morning
- School Nutrition Director should be a member the Maine Child Nutrition listserv.
- Post videos to social media about what's in the meal bag this week and how to prepare meals safely.
- Staff should take advantage of online training opportunities.

SFSP

- Unanticipated closures.
- Site eligibility waiver.
- All sites are eligible to feed kids and claim kids at the free rate.
- Claim all children.

NSLP

- F/R/P online applications.
- Establish a way to track meal counts by student.
- Meal orders?

Things to Consider

- Teacher/nutrition/bus staff union contracts.
- Feeding children that are in quarantine at home.
- Decreased revenue for sales (a la carte, adult meals, catering).
- USDA Guidance on counting and claiming meals in the different meal service models.
- Food Service Directors will have to enforce their policies and procedures.