

Maine Department of Education
Child Nutrition
08/05/2020

**Questions and Answers for Operating the National School Lunch Program
During School Year 2021**

When does the operation of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) begin?

The day school begins is the day NSLP begins and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) ends.

What about SFSP waivers? The SFSP waivers expire August 31, 2020.

If we do a hybrid model - students are on site some days and some remote - do we use NSLP or SFSP or can we do both?

You will follow the NSLP for claiming when school begins.

If we go back to remote learning after two weeks of school, can I go back to summer?

As of August 5, NO, September is not a month USDA allows unanticipated closure for summer to be used.

If the start of school is delayed and we decide to continue for the first 30 days with summer feeding, can we do that with all schools or just eligible sites?

If the start of school is delayed, you can continue SFSP but there are no waivers and you must follow traditional summer regulations. Sites must be eligible using school data or census, congregate feeding and meal times are some of the considerations to think about, unless we get a waiver.

Annual Participation Packet

It is still due August 15th for all districts Yes. If you need additional time contact us. No claim can be paid until the Annual Participation Packet has been submitted and approved by the Legal Agent and DOE.

We are planning on using two different methods of accountability. How do I indicate this?

The system only allows you to select one method. Select the methods that will be used the majority of the time. Upload a description of the other method in 'Supplemental Attachments'. If the method you are using is not included, select 'Proposed System'.

How will adult pricing be determined? Child Nutrition staff will be looking at SY 2019 per meal cost data for determining acceptable adult pricing.

What about student pricing and the PLE tool (Price Lunch Equity tool). **There is no change at this point to the regulations and requirements. There is a training video on line on how to complete the PLE tool.**

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/nutrition/financial/schoolmealpricing>

How do I come up with the Price Equity Offset amount if the district decision is to use the local appropriation amount? **The PLE tool will give you that amount. It is a tab non-Federal funds. Just complete the form.**

When I do the PLE am correct in understanding that I enter in SY19 data? **That is a good question our current guidance is use SY20 data**

Will districts be required to update their annual application for NSLP every time the district has a change in service model? **The current plan is not to make districts do this. Complete the annual packet with what the plan(s) are for the year. There are instructions on our web page "online claims" <https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/nutrition/claims>**

Meal Benefit Applications

Do I need to do applications? **Paper copies/parent letter MUST be available to all on or before the first day of school. The district can offer on-line applications as an option from a 3rd party company. DOE has an agreement with NutriLink for SY 21 contact Child Nutrition office for details.**

I have an admin review this year, do I need to print the online applications for the review? **No, reviewers will work with you and this year application review may be waived.**

Can I carry a student's eligibility status into SY 21? **Carryover of student status is 30 operating school days every year. A school day is an educational day.**

We are starting with remote learning on day one. When do I have to collect applications? **Applications must be submitted by households every year.**

General Concepts

On site instruction for all
Remote instruction for all
Some days on site some days remote
On site with some remote learners
Then a mix of above or several others

What Do I Have to Do? If it is a school day, you **must offer the lunch program, 20-A 6602.1.A. You must offer breakfast to all when served 20-A 6602 1. B. Breakfast after the Bell 20-A §6602 1. E must be considered.**

What about my paid students? Do students have to pay?

That is a local decision. There are no regulations that require students to pay for a meal. Students with no documentation or approved eligibility meal application are to be claimed as paid students.

How are we going to charge the students? **Local choice if you charge the paid student for meals. Remember reduced is at no cost to the parents. If you are charging need to follow all guidance related to student pricing both Federal and State level.**

If our district were to choose to pay for full price student meals what guidelines would we need to go by? **Would you be using Special Provision 2? If so, then notified Child Nutrition and begin the process. If the district says feed, at year end at min a reconcile of finances would need to take place.**

Do Adults have to pay for their meals? **Adults directly involved in operation of program can be offered a meal at no charge. This does not mean the monitors for example.**

On Site Instruction for All

Can I use the school lunch trays or have to use disposable products such as Styrofoam containers for delivering meals to classrooms? **There is a polystyrene law we need to update our understanding of the law. Current understanding the law takes effect 1/2021.**

What about serving breakfast at school versus sending breakfast home with students? **Look at your districts plan and what works best. Keep in mind food safety.**

Are distancing Lexan dividers allowed? **This may be allowed by National CDC but there is a question about the effectiveness, the emotional impact and the cleaning routine. The understanding is Maine CDC has not approved them as a replacement for the face mask.**

Can I offer take home lunch on half days? **That is acceptable under current waivers.**

A La Carte sales **Acceptable using local and CDC suggestions**

Off Site Instruction for All

What if the family chooses not to send their enrolled student for on-site learning? **This is a parent and district choice. Enrolled students need to be offered meals.**

What about Home school children and siblings who are not enrolled? **Home school children not eligible for reimbursable meals and siblings are not. Meals are for only enrolled students.**

Accountability still a must? **Yes, and documentation used to prepare the claim must be kept for 3 years plus the current.**

Can we offer breakfast and lunch to students who are doing remote learning? **Yes, in fact enrolled students must be offered a meal.**

Can we use Ed Techs or other school staff to assist with assembling/bagging meals? **Yes, Extra help is great. They must be properly attired and follow all sanitation rules.**

We are doing a hybrid start, so we have children coming two days a week and remote/home learning two days. How can we feed the children on their one day not in school (remote and on-site)? **If you choose to feed children on a non-school day, these would be meals that could not be claimed and would require non-federal funding.**

Do we have to offer breakfast & lunch for remote learners? If so, can these be bulk meals? **Yes, you can do bulk meals. You will need to notify the State Agency for tracking and recording purposes.**

If we do bulk meals and one of the days that we provided meals for turns out to be a non-learning/snow day...will we get reimbursed? **Only school days/learning days meals can be claimed for reimbursement.**

Take Out Meals

Can we continue bulk meals this school year? **Yes, under certain conditions. Remember this is the NSLP so only school day meals can be claimed. Bulk meals must include storage and reheating instructions and follow the NSLP Meal pattern.**

What do I have to do when parents do not send their enrolled child to school? **Enrolled students must be offered a meal. The parent can come to the school and pick up a meal for their student.**

Food delivery options

Can we use an offsite building to disperse food for remote learners? **Yes, an offsite building can be used and does not need to be part of the school system.**

Am I correct in understanding that Walter suggested that meals going home could be frozen? And give heating instructions and food safety instructions? **This is more for the bulk**

meals. I did say chilling the milk towards the frozen state would act as a chill pack for the products in the container.

Are meals required to be delivered directly to enrolled students who choose to remote learning? **Meals must be offered but does not require home delivery.**

Accountability

What guidance are you offering for Point of Service (POS) for remote learning days? **Same guidance as on site. Need to be accountable for reimbursable meals served to students.**

Is a classroom checklist acceptable? **Yes, the classroom checklist of students taking a meal can be used to prepare the claim form.**

Can orders be taken in the morning, put into the POS and then delivered to classroom? **The law states accountability is when it can be determined a reimbursable is provided to the student. So, what is the procedure if student does not take the meal? The waivers are not clear here.**

Some Days Remote Others On Site

What will student accountability look like? **Same accountability or modified that works best for students and district. The law states accountability is when it can be determined a reimbursable is provided to the student.**

For half-day sessions (Group 1: 7-10 & Group 2: 11:00-2:00) How can I offer Breakfast to the group 2 students? **Take out breakfast the day before, offered at the school.**

We have two groups; each group will be scheduled to attend school in-person each week for two days and to attend remotely for two days a total of 4 days of remote learning. Can I claim the meals? **The fifth day and weekend when no school day/educational learning is taking place meals cannot be claimed.**

Can I have a pick-up time on Tuesday to send meals home with students in Cohort A for Wed, Thurs, Friday? **Yes, if all 3 days (w, th, f) are counted as school days.**

Can I have a pick-up time on Friday to send meals home with students in Cohort B for Mon, Tues, Wed? **Yes, if all 3 days (m,t,w) are counted as school days.**

Can I send breakfast home for 5 days so that kids can eat breakfast before they come to school each day? **Yes. all 5 days are school days. This is ok. Breakfast must be offered to all student**

On Site with some Remote Learners

District provides remote learning for a few while in-school on site operating, would offering meals be required? **Yes, to enrolled students.**

Are districts required to deliver directly to students who choose to learn remotely? **No, meals must be offered to enrolled students. You are not required to deliver.**

Meal Pattern Flexibility

Do I really have to offer two types of milk for take-out meals? **District can request a waiver for one type of milk. Cannot ask for a waiver of no milk unless the product is not available.**

If we are delivering complete reimbursable meals to classrooms. One meal choice. Do we have to offer two choices of milk at breakfast and lunch? **The district can ask for a meal flexibility for offering one type of milk.**

Overall considerations

What if students eat in the classroom and the teacher or other student has a severe allergy? **This is something a district needs to be aware of.**

No water fountains, how water requirement met for students? **We have requested a waiver for this law .**

Can I use bottled water and who pays for it? **Bottled water can be used but the cost can not be passed onto students participating in the NSLP. The cost USDA also considers unallowable to the food service Department. This will be a local cost.**

State Laws

Does the shaming law “Ensuring Student Access to Meals” apply when meals are delivered home? If a paid student has a balance on their account, are we still required to give them a meal if they request one? **All students who request a meal get a meal. You can ask for payment, but students get the meal and parent should understand that.**

Can I refuse an adult meal for their child because of outstanding debt? **All students get a meal. You can ask for payment, but students get the meal and parent should understand that.**

What about CACFP at risk after school programs? **The law is still on the books and must be followed. We have listed the schools that must take action.**

Am I correct in understanding that if our district wants to opt-out of the CACFP program, we could put that on our August 18th agenda and send you a copy of the minutes approving that we opt out? **This is correct school board vote to opt out.**

Do I still have to consider Breakfast after the Bell as an alternative? **Yes, if you are a school that meets the conditions of offering Breakfast after the Bell you will need to take action to meet the law.**

Waivers

These are the waivers Maine offers to School Districts currently.

Forms will be used to capture district information for the following:

- Multiple Meal Distribution
- Non-congregate Feeding
- OvS High School Level
- Meal Times Flexibility
- Parent/Guardian Meal Pick-up
- Meal Patter Flexibility
- Whole Grain Waiver
- Alternate Serving Locations
- Districts opting out of breakfast after the bell

Has Maine requested additional waivers from USDA to extend summer? **Maine has several waivers in including extending SFSP.**

Funding

Who is responsible for paying for the extra bus runs to deliver the meals? **The CRS funding may be a source or it may revert back to food service if bus run only for food service.**

Needed equipment costs? **Cares funding or if for food service it can be a food service expense. Anything over \$5000 needs DOE/CN prior approval unless on the preapproved list.**

Long Range Ideas

Does this mean if we can offer on remote learning days (snow storms), we can provide meals to take home the night before? **With the current waivers this is possible for school/ educational days.**

If schools are doing hybrid learning and a snow day is used and schools choose to use remote learning on that snow day, would we still have to provide a meal on that snow day? **In this case it would be not required, it was not an expected closure, offering the learning component indicates you should.**

Could it be as simple as the family could come to the school to pick up the meal at a set a time frame at the school to get the meal? **That simple, yes**

Can we do Offer vs. Serve for one meal and “serve” for the other? For example, serve at breakfast and OVS at lunch. **Yes, High Schools must have OVS. Waiting on an approved waiver.**

Crystal Ball

What about reviews and other monitoring done by the State Agency? **This will continue in a different form. USDA has granted a waiver to do desk audits which will review fewer areas but t may be a little more effort. District that will be receiving a review in SY 21 have been notified.**

Can I still get Technical Assistance? **Yes, we are all still working either in the office or remotely and will help where we can. Travel and visiting is limited at this time.**

Staff Concerns

How will we complete our yearly training/civil rights etc? **Training will be available using virtual meetings. Many trainings have already been placed on our training page.**