

# Schools, COVID-19, Nutrition and Food Safety

## Lunch Break and Shared Spaces

- Students can enjoy meal times with their class cohorts with distancing in place.
- Weather permitting, consider having meals outdoors where distancing is not required.
- Capacity limits for cafeterias should be established to enable physical distancing between cohorts, and as much distance as possible within cohorts.
- Break and lunch periods can be staggered if necessary to allow for adequate distancing.
- Water bottles will be required to be filled (encourage hands-free refillable water stations if available), and drinking directly from the mouthpiece of water fountains should be avoided.
- Students should avoid sharing food and food items between themselves and may need reminders of this.
- Ensure proper food safety precautions are taken during disposal of food and waste products, and during cleaning and sanitizing of food utensils, cutlery and equipment.
- Common food items, like salt and pepper shakers, should be avoided. Napkins and cutlery should be dispensed rather than a self-serve model.
- Shared microwaves and kitchen spaces are permitted. Students should maintain physical distancing and wear their masks while waiting in line.

## Student Nutrition Programs and Food Vendors

- Student nutrition programs, hot lunches, milk programs and other food events are permitted to operate as usual, with multiple individuals, including students, preparing and serving food items.
- Adequate food handling and safety practices must be followed, along with cohorting and IPAC strategies. If student cohorts cannot maintain separation in indoor settings, a third party, such as a volunteer or staff member, should perform the activity.
- Foods are not required to be individually packaged. However, refrain from serving loose food items, such as a vegetable or fruit tray, where possible. Remove commonly shared items, such as condiments, as well.
  - Note: Any food items sent from home to be shared with other students must be pre-packaged; homemade items are not permitted at this time.
- Healthy food options, as outlined by the School Food and Beverage Policy and the Student Nutrition Program Nutrition Guidelines, should be provided regardless of the program model followed.

## Student Food Preparation Activities

- Activities that allow students to prepare or serve food are allowed, provided cohorting and IPAC strategies are followed.
- The use of shared materials, such as cooking utensils, is permitted. Proper cleaning and sanitizing of food preparation items should be performed following the activity.
- Hand washing and cough etiquette should be reinforced throughout the activity.
- As much distancing as possible between students should be promoted by setting up stations with all of the cooking equipment and food supplies needed for the activity.
- Students should be masked for the duration of the food preparation activity, and only remove their mask to eat or drink the items prepared, while maintaining proper distancing.