



PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF NORTH CAROLINA

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION | Mark Johnson, *Superintendent of Public Instruction*

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Subject: **Preparing and Providing Meals for Students: Steps to Protect Yourself and Others from COVID-19**

School Nutrition Administrators:

Thank you for making North Carolina children a priority. The meals you prepare and serve during this unanticipated school closure serve as a lifeline for those with critical need. Your safety while performing these duties is top priority. Please see the attached handout, *Preparing and Providing Meals for Students: Steps to Protect Yourself and Others from COVID-19*, to learn the actions you can take to protect yourself and others.

Sincerely,

Lynn Harvey

LH/dm

Enclosures

SCHOOL NUTRITION AND DISTRICT OPERATIONS DIVISION

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY/AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

Preparing and Providing Meals for Students: Steps to Protect Yourself and Others from COVID-19



Minimize Exposure and Person-to-Person Contact

- Older adults and people who have severe underlying chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease, diabetes, or are immunocompromised seem to be at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness. Consider allowing these employees to stay home from work.
- Only handle food when healthy. People who are coughing, feverish, short of breath, vomiting or have diarrhea or other symptoms of illness should not prepare or serve meals.
- Practice social distancing in the kitchen and service areas. Establish individual workstations at least six (6) feet apart
- Limit the number of staff members who have face-to-face interactions with the public.

Practice Good Personal Hygiene

- Ensure bathrooms and other handwashing sinks are consistently stocked with soap and paper towels. Wash hands frequently with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Dry hands with a clean, disposable paper towel.
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers containing at least 60% alcohol at key points including building and kitchen entrances/exits, check-in/participation roster stations, serving areas, and in transport vehicles.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Encourage use of tissues and proper coughing/sneezing etiquette.
- Bring a spare, clean uniform to change into as needed. Consider bringing an additional change of clothes to wear home and wash hands thoroughly before returning home.



Follow Routine Food Safety and HACCP Protocols

- Always wash hands thoroughly before, during, and after food preparation and meal service.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize cutting boards, tables, utensils, and other food contact surfaces frequently.
- Ensure Time/Temperature Controlled for Safety (TCS) foods are cooked to the proper temperature. Hold hot foods at 135°F or higher and cold foods at 41°F or below until time for service.
- Implement Time as a Public Control (TPHC) procedures to ensure safety for transported foods. (See Time as a Public Health Control Procedure (TPHC) SAMPLE procedure for transported meals during unanticipated school closure resulting from COVID-19 for further guidance). It is a best practice to provide food safety instructions with meals (i.e., “keep refrigerated until consumed”).

Continue routine cleaning and sanitizing procedures.

- Frequently clean and sanitize food contact surfaces and other frequently touched surfaces (i.e., preparation tables, utensils, serving areas/tables, transport vehicles, cold and hot holding equipment used for transporting food, doorknobs, oven/refrigerator/freezer/hot holding cabinet handles, and light switches, etc.)
- Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label.
- Ensure adequate cleaning and sanitizing supplies are maintained.

