



Office for Prekindergarten through Grade 12 Education
Child Nutrition Program Administration
89 Washington Avenue, Room 375 EBA, Albany, NY 12234
(518) 473-8781 Fax (518) 473-0018
www.nysed.gov/cn/cnms.htm

To: School Food Service Directors/Managers

From: Paula Tyner-Doyle, Coordinator

Date: May 8, 2014

Subject: Clarification of the Policy on Consumption of Meal Components Outside of the Foodservice Area; and the Whole Grain-Rich Requirement

This memorandum is intended to clarify two issues regarding meals offered in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP). First, the memorandum clarifies the policy of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) regarding student consumption of certain lunch or breakfast items outside of the foodservice area and meal period. Second, it clarifies the requirement to offer whole grain-rich products in the NSLP and SBP.

Meal Items Outside the Foodservice Area

Meals offered in the NSLP and SBP are intended to be consumed at school in a designated foodservice area during the established meal service period. However, USDA recognizes that with time limited lunch periods and the increased amount of fruits and vegetables offered as part of the meals, some students may be inclined to save some items for consumption at a later time. As a reminder, there is no federal prohibition of this practice, and USDA encourages it as a means of reducing potential food waste and encouraging consumption of healthy school meals.

For food safety reasons, this practice should be limited to only food items that do not require cooling or heating, such as a whole fruit or a bag of baby carrots. In addition, schools may also wish to set up sharing tables for appropriate items to minimize food waste.

Further, Program operators should be aware of all applicable State and local food safety regulations to ensure that their policies for saving or sharing food are consistent with such standards, as well as their own HACCP food safety plans.

USDA encourages program operators to use this flexibility to facilitate and encourage children's consumption of fruits and vegetables, and help reduce food waste in the NSLP and SBP. Please note that this flexibility is intended to address practical constraints such as meal period time limitations that may prevent students from consuming their entire meal in the foodservice area. We continue to encourage schools to allow students a reasonable amount of time to select and consume their meals during the meal service period.

This flexibility does not imply that entire school meals may be given to children to take home, as this would not be an allowable practice.

Whole Grain-Rich Requirement

USDA also would like to clarify that 100 percent whole grain products are not required in the NSLP and SBP this current 2013-14 School Year (SY), nor will 100 percent whole grain products be required beginning in SY 2014-15. There has been discussion about the misunderstanding that exists regarding grains requirements and this memo attempts to clarify.

During 2013-14, half of all grains offered must be whole grain-rich, meaning that at least 50 percent of the grains in the product must be whole grain. In 2013-14, products that contained only enriched flours were allowed as long as they did not exceed 50 percent of the weekly offerings for grains.

Beginning SY 2014-2015 (July 1, 2014), 100 percent of all grains must be whole grain rich, meaning at least 50 percent the grains in all products must be whole grain in order to be counted in the reimbursable meal. You will not be able to count grain products that contain only enriched flour as part of your weekly grain offerings in 2014-15.

Whole grain-rich refers to products which contain at least 50 percent whole grains and the remainder of the grains can be enriched. For example, a product containing 2 cups of whole wheat flour and 2 cups of enriched white flour would meet the 50 percent whole grain-rich requirement if there are no other grains in the product. Additional guidance on allowable grains is available in The Whole Grains Resource attached as a link at the end of this memorandum or by accessing the USDA FNS website <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/whole-grain-resource>.

Questions concerning this guidance should be directed to your Child Nutrition Program representative at (518) 473-8781.

[http://portal.nysed.gov/portal/page/pref/CNKC/FBMP_pp/USDA%20Whole%20Grain%20Resource%20\(3-14\).pdf](http://portal.nysed.gov/portal/page/pref/CNKC/FBMP_pp/USDA%20Whole%20Grain%20Resource%20(3-14).pdf)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal, and where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request a form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities, may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339; or (800) 845-6136 (Spanish).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.