



**THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK /
ALBANY, NY 12234**

Office for Prekindergarten through Grade 12 Education
Child Nutrition Program Administration
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To: School Food Service Directors/Managers
From: Child Nutrition Program Administration
Date: Friday, December 31, 2021
Subject: Providing School Meals to Students Learning Remotely in SY 2021-2022

With election of applicable waivers, current USDA flexibilities allow school food authorities (SFAs) the option to provide students learning remotely with access to meals on school days during the 2021-2022 School Year.

Waivers

Non-congregate Meal Service*: Waives the requirement for meals to be served and consumed by students at school and allows meals to be provided outside of school.

Meal Service Times*: Waives meal service time requirements and allows meals to be served outside of standard mealtimes.

Parent/Guardian Pick up: Waives the requirement that meals are served directly to eligible children.

Allows parents/guardians to pick up meals for their children without the child being present.

SFA's must have a plan in place to maintain accountability and program integrity including ensuring that meals are distributed only to parents or guardians of eligible children, and that duplicate meals are not distributed to any child.

** Required to provide grab and go meals, meal delivery, multiple meals at the same time and to serve food items in bulk quantities.*

Serving Bulk Items

In cases where these waivers are needed to provide nutritious meals, up to 5 days of bulk items may be provided as long as individual meals are easily identifiable as a reimbursable meal. When implementing such a distribution mechanism, SFAs:

- Must include the required food components in the proper minimum amounts for each reimbursable meal being claimed.
- Must ensure that food items are clearly identifiable as making up reimbursable meals.
- Are strongly encouraged to provide menus with directions indicating which items are to be used for each meal and the portion sizes.
- Should consider whether households have access to refrigeration, stoves, microwaves, etc., when providing food that requires refrigeration or further preparation, such as reheating.
- Should ensure that only minimal preparation is required, and that food is not provided as ingredients for recipes that require chopping, mixing, baking, etc.

How to Elect Waivers:

SFAs elect and manage waivers through the Child Nutrition Management System. See instructions provided [here](#).

Other Considerations

- If an SFA opts to provide access to meals to remote learners, it must provide equal access to all enrolled students learning remotely. For example, an SFA has both in-person and remote learners and opts to not provide access to remote learners. The SFA then transitions to fully remote learning due to COVID-19 numbers. If the SFA provides access to meals, it must provide meal access to all enrolled students, including the students that were learning remotely prior to the school transitioning to full remote.
- Meals may only be provided for school days and not for days the school is not in session, i.e., weekends, holidays, school breaks
- Separate flexibilities are available to SFAs during [unanticipated school closures](#) under regular program policy.

Please contact your CN representative with any questions regarding this information.

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- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
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