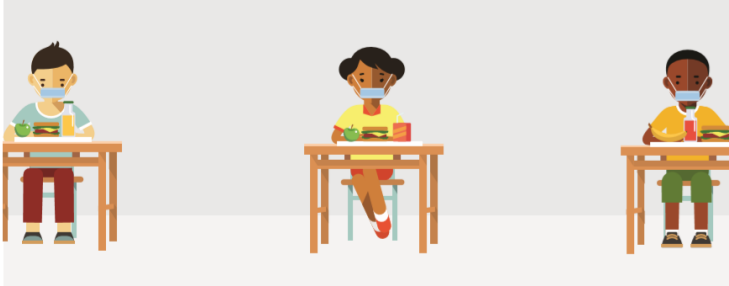


FALL MEAL SERVICE CONSIDERATIONS

Before the academic year begins, Massachusetts school nutrition directors will have to decide how to serve meals in new ways that account for social distancing and remote learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The following considerations should be discussed with your superintendent and business officials when determining the best meal service for your school nutrition program.

FOUR MEAL SERVICE MODEL OPTIONS

Each district has the flexibility to determine the model combination that is the best fit for their nutrition operations and school sites.



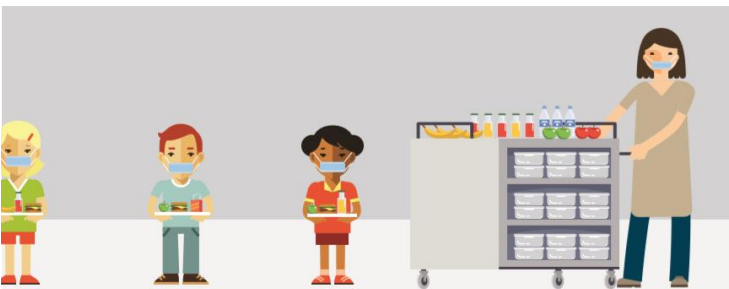
Classroom Meals

Students eat at desks spaced six-feet apart within the classroom and facing the same direction.



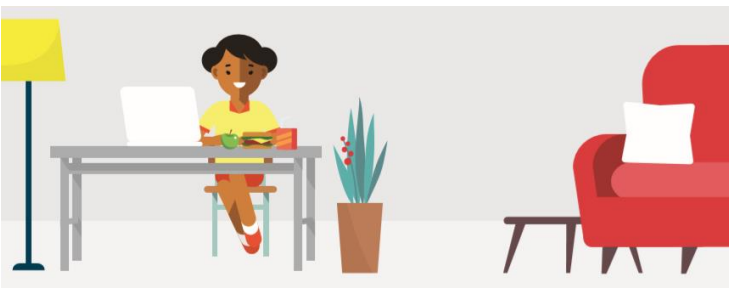
Cafeteria Meals

Cohorts of students eat at cafeteria tables six feet apart or separated by plexiglass barriers.



Meals in Alternative Spaces

Meals are served and eaten in alternative spaces, six feet apart, such as common areas, outdoors, or wider hallways.



Remote Meals

Students that are not in-person five days a week are provided meals through grab-and-go, curbside pickup or delivery models.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR DECIDING ON YOUR SCHOOL'S MEAL SERVICE PLAN:

Safety

Safety of students and staff is the most important consideration when choosing a model or model combination. The chosen model/s must ensure 6 feet of space between unmasked parties and 3 feet when all parties are masked. Consider safety in ordering, preparation, distribution, consumption, and cleanup.

Student Needs

The economic impacts of COVID-19 may increase the demand for school meal service as more students become eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Consider ways to promote and streamline participation to meet an increasing student need.

Planning & Staffing

Each model will require changes to meal planning and staffing. Lead times for meal planning and food procurement as well as staff training time should be considered for each model.

Financial

Each meal service model may impact both the costs and revenues of school nutrition programs. Changes may require general funds to ensure safe operation of the cafeteria.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDANCE FOR EACH MEAL SERVICE MODEL:

Classroom Meals

- Meals can be delivered to classrooms or cohorts of students may pick up meals from the cafeteria and bring back to classrooms.
- Additional transportation equipment such as carts and coolers may need to be planned for and procured.
- Reducing classroom size during meals may be needed to ensure six-foot distancing.
- Eating areas will need to be cleaned in between groups and before and after meals.

Cafeteria Meals

- Schools should stagger lunch times and keep classrooms / cohorts together.
- Ensure that students do not mingle with other cohorts / classes
- Refer to Appendix C of DESE guidance for cafeteria seating diagrams
- Students should maintain 6 feet distance when unmasked, unless Plexiglas barriers are used to separate students.
- Ensure new signage, cleaning and waste remove practices are in place.

Meals in Alternative Spaces

- Other spaces within a school can be utilized for meals such as wider hallways or outdoors as weather permits.
- Utilizing alternate space can help with classroom size reduction for meals ensuring six-foot distancing.
- Ensure meals served in alternate locations within a school do not obstruct emergency egress plans. Consult with local fire officials.
- Outdoor meal consumption could provide the best option to ensure social distancing as weather permits.
- Meals can be delivered to alternative spaces or cohorts of students may pick up meals from the cafeteria and bring back to the alternate space.

Remote Meals

- Schools must offer meals to remote learners.
- Meal distribution models such as grab and go, curbside, home delivered, or bus routes may be used.
- Multiple meals may be provided to cover additional remote learning days and parents and guardians can pick up meals.
- Meals will only be provided to enrolled students and claimed based on student individual eligibility