

FOOD IN THE SCHOOL SETTING

COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE

Eating Location and Timing Considerations for Students and Staff

- Designated seating for staff and students when eating, following physical distancing guidelines.
- Students eat with their cohort.
- In good weather consider that students eat outside with their cohort.
- Hand hygiene performed before eating, and before & after touching mask.
- Students use their own water bottle, labelled with their name. Single use disposable cups or water bottles can be available if a water bottle is forgotten.
- Students and staff bring their own lunches, no sharing of foods. Litter-less lunches encouraged. In some boards, students are asked to bring home all lunch and snack containers/leftovers to recycle in their own home rather than at school.
- When ready to eat, face coverings can be removed while seated. Face coverings are replaced before leaving the eating area.
- Students are to be educated on how to safely take off, store, and replace masks after eating.
- All eating areas should be cleaned and sanitized before and after eating food with 200ppm of quaternary ammonium or Board approved disinfectant.
- Stagger lunches, where possible, to avoid lines to wash hands and access washrooms.
- Ensure adequate physical distancing (2 metres) in staff rooms.
- Floor markers in staff room may help direct traffic flow.

Activities to Avoid

- Students shouldn't be involved in non-instructional activities related to food at this time. This includes activities like:
 - Sharing food for classroom celebrations (i.e. Halloween celebrations).
 - Re-purposing or re-distributing food prepared by students during instructional time.
 - Preparing foods for the student nutrition program.
- Students are not permitted to use microwaves, or other multi-use appliances and/or utensils.
- If water bottle refill stations are made available for students, ensure physical distancing and hand hygiene is enforced.

Food and Instructional Courses

- All food handling and sanitation practices as described in the [Ontario Food Premise Regulations](#) must be followed.
- Students must wear masks indoors and therefore must be worn when preparing food.
- Wash hands before, during (as required), and after food handling/food preparation. Hands should also be washed before and after eating.
- When preparing food for courses sharing of food is not allowed. Leftover food should not be re-purposed or redistributed. Students should:
 - only eat the food that they make.
 - be seated when tasting or eating food.
- Use of tower gardens can be permitted providing appropriate precautions are in place. Please reach out to your local public health unit for additional guidance.

Food and Third Party Food Services (Ontario Student Nutrition Program - OSNP), Cafeterias, Hot Lunch Program)

- Hot lunch programs and cafeterias in some local School Boards are currently on pause.
- Provincial direction states that third party food services including Student Nutrition Programs will be delivered so that all students can participate if they desire.
- “Grab and Go” individually packaged items only at this time. No unpackaged loose foods.
- All surfaces, bins, containers, trays for food must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use with 200ppm of quaternary ammonium or Board approved disinfectant.
- Foods served in the OSNP must follow the [Ontario Student Nutrition Program Guidelines](#).
- Currently volunteers are not allowed in schools to assist with OSNP; however, they may be able to coordinate from outside (e.g., arrange deliveries/shop, complete reports etc.). Check with your Principal.
- Teachers or staff, including noon hour supervisors, with access to the school may be able to help with student nutrition programs.
- The program must meet the requirements of the [Ontario Food Premises Regulations](#). Schools can also visit COVID-19 [Guidance for Food Premises](#) for more information about food safety in schools and COVID-19.
- All food preparation or packaging must occur in an inspected facility.
- Masks must be worn when handling any food.
- Limit the number of people in the food handling area/ kitchen to allow for physical distancing.

Student Nutrition Programs – How can they operate and what can be served?

- OSNPs must follow good hygiene and food safety practices to prevent spread of COVID-19.
- Currently Grab and Go individually packaged items only. No unpackaged loose foods.
- For policies and current guidelines relating to food preparation (e.g., washing fruit) and packaging food on site check with your respective School Board.
- Serve fruit in natural packaging (e.g., banana, orange/ clementine). If fruits like apples, peaches and other fruits are sourced as washed fruits they must be individually bagged/wrapped.
- Prepackaged foods can be delivered to classroom, or in a centrally stocked fridge for teacher access.
- Foods are served on trays or in bins that are cleaned and disinfected before and after use.
- Students must wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer before getting food and eating. They must be seated when eating.
- Food from a bin can be handed out, for example, by a teacher providing proper hand hygiene is performed (gloves not recommended). If tongs or a barrier (e.g., paper towel) are used hand hygiene must be performed first before using the tongs or barrier.

Vegetables and Fruit	Protein Foods
Banana, orange, clementine, washed individually wrapped apple or pear, unsweetened applesauce, fruit cups (in juice or water, individually portioned fruit/veg servings (sourced))	Cheese string or individual cheese portion, individual yogurt drink, tube or cup, white milk carton, individual hummus, individual peanut butter packets*, individual packages of sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds* * (following your schools anaphylaxis policy)
<p style="text-align: center;">Whole Grains</p> <p>Individual whole grain crackers or melba toasts, individual cereal bowls (cheerios and Chex available), low sugar granola bars (no chocolate chips, chocolate dip or marshmallows). **Some foods are not suitable for children under the age of 4 including: whole fruits with a hard texture or a pit; whole baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, grapes, fibrous fruits and vegetables with a stringy texture, whole seeds larger than sesame seeds, popcorn.</p>	

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Adapted with permission from Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit