

Food Services Guidance for Day and Overnight Summer Camps Summer 2021

Purpose

This document provides food service guidance for day and overnight summer camps located in Vermont for Summer 2021.

Availability of Free Meals

During Summer 2021, waivers from the USDA allow non-profit organizations, local governments, and schools to offer meals funded through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) to all children, 18 and under, at no charge to children and their families anywhere in Vermont. Schools, non-profit and local government summer camp providers are encouraged to consider using this program to provide meals this summer. Under the waivers, meals can be offered in congregate or non-congregate settings. Organizations may choose to provide meals just to students enrolled in their camp or summer programming, or they may operate an open meal site where any child can access meals. For more information on becoming an SFSP sponsor, please contact [Jamie Curley](#) at the Vermont Agency of Education, Child Nutrition Programs. Please note that there is a June 1 deadline to become sponsor of the Summer Food Service Program, but additional sites may be added under existing sponsors all summer long.

General Guidance

- Current information suggests that food and food packaging are not known sources of SARS-CoV-2 transmission. In general, the standard food safety practices used to prevent all foodborne illness should be sufficient to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 through food.
- Continue to follow all food safety requirements in the [Vermont Food Code](#). Have food service staff conduct frequent self-audits to ensure that these practices are being followed. Key areas to check include:
 - Allergen awareness and safety including, cleaning and sanitizing of food prep and eating surfaces to remove any oils and residue from allergy prone foods such as nuts and seafood.
 - Correct dishwasher temperatures for sanitization.
 - [Employee handwashing.](#)
 - [Cleaning and sanitizing surfaces.](#)
 - Procedures for employees to call in sick or doing non-food related duties at home when experiencing minor symptoms or in quarantine.

Contact Information:

If you have questions about this document or would like additional information please contact:
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- HACCP-based Food Safety Plans may need to be adjusted to include any new procedures.
- Evaluate kitchen workstations and modify them to allow for physical distancing when possible.
 - If the kitchen is small, consider moving some workstations into other spaces, such as the cafeteria.
 - Face workstations away from each other, such as towards the wall instead of toward the center of the room.
- Consider methods for ensuring food service continuity if food service staff become sick or need to quarantine. Because food service staff work in close proximity to each other, it is likely that all food service staff could be considered close contacts if one staff member becomes sick with COVID.
 - Consider setting up potential coverage from schools operating the Summer Food Service Program or other camps within the area.
 - The camp could look into purchasing a supply of shelf-stable meals to be available in the event that food service staff need to stay home.
 - The food service staff could create an emergency menu of simple meals that could be created by substitute staff.
 - Ensure that food service substitutes have food safety training. Free web-based food safety training is available at any time from the [Institute for Child Nutrition](#). Child Nutrition Programs also recommends these [very basic training videos on hygiene, temperature control and sanitization](#) from Iowa State University Cooperative Extension.

Guidance for Meal Service

- When masks are required by the [Vermont Forward Guidance](#), masks should be worn during mealtimes anytime that a child or staff member is not actually eating/drinking. Masks should be on when the child is receiving their meal and when they are disposing of their trash and trays or dishes. Masks should only be removed when the child is about to start eating/drinking, and they should be replaced as soon as the child is done eating/drinking.
- Trays, utensils and dishes/cups that are washed and sanitized between uses may be used. Disposable items are not required.
- Any transportation of food should happen, as usual, on clean equipment, with proper handwashing before handling.
- Consider ways to provide water. Children may be provided with their own reusable water bottles, if there is a location available to refill these during the day. Water fountains can be used, or a water cooler with dispensing spigot. However, both should be regularly cleaned.
- Allow time for students to wash their hands prior to and after eating. For outdoor sites without handwashing facilities, hand sanitizer should be provided. See page 5 of

USDA's [The Institute for Child Nutrition's Summer Meals Food Safety Training Guide](#) for instructions on how to set up a portable handwashing station.

- Adults assisting children with their food should wash their hands before handling the child's plate or lunch box, and wash or use hand sanitizer between the handling of the next child's lunch box. This includes staff helping students open milk cartons or peel fruit.
- Additional COVID-19 guidance for food service programs can be found on the [Agency of Education's COVID-19 webpage](#).
- It is recommended that meals not be self-serve. Unitized meals may be used, or adults may serve children.

Guidance for Providing Meals in a Cafeteria/Dining Hall

Cafeteria Capacity, Seating and Spacing

- The total cafeteria capacity should not exceed the current state or local limits on indoor gathering size, as indicated in the [Vermont Forward guidance](#).
- Camps should ensure space for distancing among children while eating to the best extent possible.
- Individual desks may be a better alternative to tables in the cafeteria, as these will allow for seating to be spaced more appropriately.
- Take steps to ensure physical distancing when students are waiting to receive their meals and at the end of the meal when disposing of compost/trash and returning trays. This could involve placing markers on the floor and using crowd control stanchions to direct lines.
- Children should not remain in the cafeteria any longer than is necessary for their class/pod/cohort to finish eating. Take steps to prevent children from lingering to socialize.

Meal Service

- Engineering controls such as sneeze guards should be installed in the serving area.
- No-touch beverage dispensers may be used; however, children should be reminded through signage to use a new cup each time they use the dispenser.

Guidance for Providing Meals to Small Groups in Separate Spaces

- Desks or tables that students eat at should be cleaned with soap and water following snack/mealtime.
- Unitized meals could be brought to these spaces. Food safety practices should be followed when serving perishable meals in alternate locations. The best option is to serve meals immediately. However, if the meals will not be served immediately, hot holders and coolers should be used to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- Additional trash and janitorial services may be necessary when serving meals in separate eating areas.

- Ideally, a designated staff member or child should place meals on the child's desks or eating area, to avoid students congregating to collect their meals from one location.

Guidance for Food Service Outdoors

Providing meal service outdoors is preferred, wherever feasible.

- Make plans for inclement weather, such as tents, or one of the options above for indoor dining.
- Outdoor eating locations should be chosen carefully to avoid hazards such as traffic and animal manure.
- Hand sanitizer should be provided if handwashing facilities are not available.
- Camps should ensure space for distancing among children while eating to the best extent possible.