

## **A Strong and Healthy Start: Safety and Health Guidance for Vermont Schools FAQ 4: Child Nutrition Services**

The Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) has released joint guidance with the Vermont Department of Health on safely reopening schools. This document, [A Strong and Healthy Start: Safety and Health Guidance for Vermont Schools](#), provides health guidance to school administrators and school personnel as they plan and implement the reopening of schools for the 2020-21 School Year in the context of COVID-19.

This Frequently Asked Questions document responds to follow up questions from educators and administrators and is intended to clarify and expand on the guidance.

---

### **Q1. Can food service staff bus dirty dishes through regular dirty dish window, or do they have to do that outside the kitchen?**

Dirty dishes may be bussed by staff through the regular dirty dish window. Food service staff who handle dirty dishes should regularly wash their hands and avoid touching their faces while handling dishes. The dirty dish window should be frequently disinfected along with other frequently touched surfaces.

---

### **Q2. Can food service staff use face shields instead of face masks?**

Face masks are recommended for food service staff who are able to wear them. Per the Strong and Healthy Start: Safety and Health Guidance for Vermont Schools, the use of clear facial shields for adults is allowable as long as they meet all of the health guidance of the Vermont Department of Health. Face shields should extend below the chin and to the ears laterally, and there should be no exposed gap between the forehead and the shield's headpiece. Staff who are using face shields should have minimal contact with students and other staff. Students should wear masks and should not wear face shields. It is important to note that it is not known if face shields provide any protection from the spray of respiratory droplets to others. CDC does not recommend the use of face shields as a substitute for masks.

**Q3. Can high schools that normally have open campuses and allow students to leave campus for lunch continue these policies, or should students be required to stay on campus all day?**

Open campus lunch policies should be suspended for the 2020-2021 school year. Arrival and departure procedures are outlined in the Strong and Healthy Start: Safety and Health Guidance for Vermont Schools and are not compatible with an open campus lunch policy.

---

**Q4. Is it allowable for the school meals program to provide/sell items other than school meals (i.e., smart snacks, or food/beverage items purchased by a parent or administrator for all children in the class as part of in-class celebrations), or food/drink items sold to teachers, as long as those items are provided following all the same health and safety guidance (provided in the classroom, unitized servings, etc.).**

These additional sales are allowable as long as an adult following all other health guidance delivers the food to the classroom.

---

**Q5. Is it possible to have a student pick up the bag/tote of food to deliver to the classroom as long as the student does not handle the meals?**

Yes. The Strong and Healthy Start: Safety and Health Guidance for Vermont Schools states that it is permissible for students to go to the cafeteria, classroom by classroom, to collect their meals. This option, as long as the student does not handle the meals, is allowable following the same principle.

---