


**Meals Served and Eaten in the Cafeteria Scenario #2 C**  
**In Person Meal Service Planning Checklist**  
(Based upon [SNA's COVID-19's Thought Starters on Reopening Schools](#) resource)










Description: Meals are served and eaten in the cafeteria.

This checklist is meant to be a foundation for exploring topics and decisions related to implementing a standard meal service during a pandemic. It is not an all-inclusive list.

Overall Considerations:

-  Develop a system to prepare and distribute meals safely – taking into account social distancing and enhanced food safety practices.

Food Safety during a Pandemic Safety Recommendations in the cafeteria:

-  Install a wall-mounted hand sanitizer dispenser at the entrance to the cafeteria
-  Install plexiglass shields along the service line and at the cashier station
-  Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices will be followed
-  The service line, cashier station, and tables will be cleaned and disinfected before use, after each group of students leave, and upon the end of the meal service.
-  Self-serve food bars, salad bars and milk dispenser units are not recommended at this time.
-  How will you maintain social distancing amongst students as they enter the cafeteria, go through the service line and sit at tables to eat? Use decals on floors to indicate the recommended social distances in the cafeteria.
-  How will you space tables 6 feet apart? How will you maintain space at tables? How many students per table? Will you mark seats with tape?
-  Could you move tables into common areas or outside to allow for more spacing?
-  Maintain social distancing amongst the food service staff. Will you plan menus, production, and food preparation schedules to allow employees to maintain the recommended physical distance of 6 feet while working when possible?

Follow the [Montana School Safety Advisory Committee Guidance on School Re-Entry](#)<sup>20</sup> for Phase 1, Phase 2 and Phase 3. Refer to [Montana's School Meal Service Procedures During a COVID-19 Pandemic](#) for specific food safety guidance. Developed June 16, 2020, by Montana OPI School Nutrition Programs and Montana Team Nutrition. The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. This project was funded using U.S. Department of Agriculture grant funds.

- 🍏 How can you maintain distance between service staff and students? Use plexiglass if distance is too close (service line, cashier station).
- 🍏 Without share tables, will you need a policy to allow students to take individually wrapped, shelf stable food items and whole, fresh fruit home to eat at a later time?

#### Menu Considerations:

- 🍏 Utilize Offer vs. Serve to allow students choice as they go through the line. How will you do this without allowing students to touch uncovered food items?
- 🍏 In lieu of a traditional salad bar, consider offering entrée salads to meet meal standards for vegetable subgroups; Can you offer two choices of fruits and vegetables along the service line and the server asks students their choice before dishing up?
- 🍏 If using a blended model of meal service (remote meals and standard cafeteria service) strive to plan menus which are adaptable to both scenarios. Brainstorm ways to repurpose leftovers.
- 🍏 Will you use a cycle menu? Could you use a seasonal cycle menu? How will you keep this menu fresh and exciting?
- 🍏 How can you maximize use of your USDA Foods and fresh, whole foods in your menus?

#### Administrative, Preparation and Service Considerations:

- 🍏 What are your staffing needs for this meal service? School food service staff will handle all meal set up and service (trays, silverware, napkins, food and beverages, condiments). Students will not self-serve and/or touch service items (spoons, tongs).
- 🍏 Will you need more staff coverage to implement enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures?
- 🍏 Do you have a backup plan in place in the event that planned menu items are suddenly hard to get? Have you given your food suppliers/vendors a list of acceptable substitute products? Do you have an “emergency” supply of packaged food items on hand to feed all students for at least 1 week? If you don’t need/use this emergency food supply, how will you incorporate this food into your existing menus/meal service to successfully use it?
- 🍏 Will you limit or exclude outside groups using your kitchen and cafeteria at this time such as concessions or other community groups?
- 🍏 Does the current lunch schedule need to change?

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