Key Food Service Information found in NYS Guidance

Food Service

Nutrition Schools and school districts should include food service directors in reopening plan discussions so they are able to meet their requirements to provide all enrolled students with access to school meals each school day whether school is in-person or remote; address all applicable health and safety guidelines; ensure compliance with Child Nutrition Program requirements; and communicate with families through multiple means, in the languages spoken by those families.

A successful nutrition program is a key component to a successful educational environment. Children cannot focus on learning when they are hungry. School meals boost learning, and studies show that students perform best academically when they are well nourished. School districts around the State did an incredible job, with tremendous community support, in ensuring that students received nutritious meals while schools were closed this past year. No child should ever go hungry, and school reopening plans must provide for the feeding of all students who require food assistance. As school food service operations transition from serving meals during unanticipated school closures and summer meals to serving school meals, School Food Authorities (SFAs) will need to consider national, state, and local health and safety guidelines. It is important that SFAs engage school food service directors in district or system wide discussions regarding plans for reopening schools to ensure that students participating in all learning models have access to healthy meals. SFAs will need to consider the resources and flexibilities necessary to transition food service operations to an onsite or off-site student meal delivery system or operate both at the same time. This includes utilizing state or nationwide waivers and updating school policies, standard operating procedures, and trainings to ensure compliance with Child Nutrition Program requirements.

***Reopening Plan Mandatory Requirements***

District/School Plan must provide all students enrolled in the SFA with access to school meals each school day. This must include:

-students in attendance at school; and

-students learning remotely.

* District/School Plan must address all applicable health and safety guidelines.

* District/School Plan must include measures to protect students with food allergies if providing meals in spaces outside the cafeteria.

* District/School Plan must include protocols and procedures for how students will perform hand hygiene before and after eating, how appropriate hand hygiene will be promoted, and how sharing of food and beverages will be discouraged.
* District/School Plan must include protocols and procedures that require cleaning and disinfection prior to the next group of students arriving for meals, if served in the same common area.
* District/School Plan must ensure compliance with Child Nutrition Program requirements.

* District/School Plan must include protocols that describe communication with families through multiple means in the languages spoken by families.

Full New York State Education Department document link: <http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/programs/reopening-schools/nys-p12-school-reopening-guidance.pdf>