

SAFELY OPERATING A STUDENT NUTRITION PROGRAM (SNP)



Before starting your Student Nutrition Program

- Check with your local school board to understand any policies around food programs that are currently in place.
- Individuals preparing or portioning food for student nutrition programs can obtain their safe food handler certification online. School boards may require individuals handling food to have their [Safe Food Handler Certification](#).
- Foods served in the SNP must follow the [Ontario Student Nutrition Program Guidelines](#).
- To make food distribution easier, individually portion foods. For example, cut vegetables or fruit can be portioned in plastic or paper bags, cups, in muffin cup liners or on coffee filters.

Safe Food Handling Steps

If serving food from a bulk tray, bin or bag, follow these safe food handling steps:

1. Designate one person to distribute food to students.
2. Perform hand hygiene before distributing food.
3. Provide tongs for easy distribution of foods to students.
4. Gloves are not recommended.

When offering students whole fruit, vegetables or packaged foods in a bowl or on a tray, follow these safe food handling steps:

1. Place hand sanitizer beside the bowl or tray.
2. Remind students to perform hand hygiene before taking from the bowl or tray. If foods are left unsupervised, post a sign reminding students to sanitize their hands before taking food and to only touch food they plan to take.
3. Trays are preferred over bins as they allow easier access to items without touching adjacent items.
4. Trays or bins should be cleaned and disinfected before and after use.
5. Potentially hazardous foods such as yogurt, cheese, eggs or cut fruit or vegetables must be kept at safe temperatures. If these foods are left out for 2 hours or more, ensure ice packs are used and temperatures are monitored. Potentially hazardous foods must not be above 4°C for more than 2 hours.

Guidance for Food Premises

Food preparation spaces used for SNP's are inspected premises and must meet the requirements of the [Ontario Food Premises Regulation](#). Schools can also visit [COVID-19 Guidance for Food Premises](#) for more information about food safety during COVID-19.

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