



October 28, 2016 JF
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TO: Building Administrators, FNS Employees, Custodians, Lunch Room Monitors, PTSA

FROM: Jessica Finger, Director, Food and Nutrition Services Department

RE: The Use of Sharing Tables in Child Nutrition Programs

Many schools have expressed an interest in providing “sharing tables” in cafeterias. A sharing table is a place to collect *safe, unopened* food and beverages that have not been consumed by one student to be available to other students. Using sharing tables is an innovative strategy to encourage the consumption of nutritious foods and reduce food waste in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs.

As you know, the school cafeteria is carefully monitored by health and safety regulations to ensure student safety from food borne illnesses. Implementing a sharing table needs to be done very carefully to protect the health of our students. A written procedure is provided below to ensure food safety and Health Code compliance if a school chooses to have a sharing table. It complies with the USDA and King County Health Department regulations for offering sharing tables, and must be adhered to if a school chooses to implement a sharing table.

PROCEDURE for “sharing table” use in the school cafeteria:

- 1.) School selects person(s) to be in charge of the “sharing table” during lunch to educate students on proper use. This person must monitor the table to ensure packaging of items placed on the sharing table is not open, punctured, or otherwise compromised. This person may invite children to participate as “sharing table helpers” or assistant monitors, teaching them about the importance of food safety, waste reduction, and recycling.
- 2.) Adhere to the guidelines in this procedure for food components that may and may not be shared. Foods that are not authorized for sharing must be discarded.
- 3.) Items placed on the “sharing table” are for use by students in the cafeteria (whole fruit with rind may be taken out of the cafeteria by students to be consumed at a later time only if the Building Administrator authorizes this practice). All other items left on the sharing table must be consumed in the cafeteria.
- 4.) To ensure food safety, and the cleanliness of our schools, any food components left over on the sharing table at the end of meal service will be discarded unless the Family Advocate and/or the school Nurse wish to take the unopened non-perishable foods to their offices and make it available to students who are in need. Alternatively, these non-perishable foods can be donated through a District approved food recovery program (see the FNS website for more information on food recovery programs).

Food Components that Can be Shared	Food Components that CANNOT be Shared
Unopened pre-packaged items, such as a bag of crackers, dried Craisins in a sealed package, sunflower seeds, shelf stable apple juice (green box), shelf stable milk (Hershey's brand), etc.	Unpackaged items, such as a muffin or breadstick.
Whole pieces of fruit with intact rinds (example: whole bananas, whole oranges).	Packaged items that can be opened and resealed (such as a cardboard container of raisins) or salad with lid.
	Open items, such as an opened bag of baby carrots or sliced apples.
	Perishable/Potentially-Hazardous foods of any kind; it is a violation of health code to re-serve these items to anyone. Examples of perishable/potentially-hazardous foods are milk, yogurt, string cheese, salads, etc.
	Uneaten or partially consumed entrée items such as pizza, hamburgers, etc. These items are both open and perishable and are NOT safe for sharing with others.
	Fresh fruit that does not have a rind (example: apples, pears).

If a school chooses to take part in a sharing table program, it is responsible for:

- Providing children and families with information about sharing table guidelines.
- Asking for input from parents and guardians, and making sure families are comfortable with their children participating in the sharing table option.
- Explaining the sharing table concept to children, taking care to emphasize the importance of healthy eating and trying new foods whenever possible.
- Displaying signage outlining sharing table “rules” and encouraging recycling and composting.
- School must submit the “Public Health Seattle and King County Request for School Food Sharing Table” application and have it approved before beginning the food share program. The form is available on the Shoreline Public School District Food and Nutrition Services webpage under the “Facility Use and Waste Reduction” tab.
- Schools choosing to take part in the sharing table program must have this procedure and the approved sharing table application posted in the cafeteria for Health Department Inspectors to review when they visit the school.