

School Year (SY) 2020-2021 Planning Q & A (Part 2)

Classroom/School

1. Please clarify with breakfast and lunch in classrooms, is it still OVS?

Yes, Offer verse Serve (OVS) is still allowed. OVS is optional for breakfast for all grades K-12. OVS is always optional for grades K-8 for lunch. It is optional for grades 9-12 for lunch for this year only (Nationwide waiver).

2. Are "And Justice for All" Posters required in every classroom?

No, posters are not required in each classroom. Schools should display posters in prominent locations throughout the school, such as a bulletin board in the main building entrance, the school office, or another area frequently visited by parents and children. Schools may prefer to copy posters and put one in each classroom, but that is not required.

3. If a single classroom is quarantined due to exposure, are we providing access to lunch to those kids like we do while remote?

Yes. Provide meals through parent pick-up or some other option. Meals must be made available for all instructional days for all students. You can always set up a pre-order/pre-pay system to help control waste.

4. Can teachers do the count roster for breakfast in the classroom?

Teachers can use a student roster or electronic Point of Service (POS) systems for breakfast in the classroom. If you are a Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) building with no virtual learning options (all students are in-person five days a week), you could use a count sheet.

5. Is potable water required to be available for breakfast and lunch in the classroom?

For Breakfast in the Classroom, there has never been a requirement to have potable water available. While potable water must be made available when breakfast is served in the cafeteria, schools are not required to make water available when breakfast is served outside the cafeteria. For Lunch in the Classroom, schools are required to make potable water available to students during meal service. When lunch is served in the classroom, the potable water requirement does apply. Schools are encouraged to make potable water available in all meal service locations as safety permits. MDE has applied for a waiver regarding potable water and is waiting to hear from USDA.

6. For schools that are not in session on Fridays, do meals need to be made available that day?

It depends if it is a virtual/e-learning day. If so, then yes, all instructional days must have meals made available.

7. Any word on serving after school snack before school is out?

MDE is still waiting for the waiver to be approved. For now, snack must still be served after the school day ends and include enrichment.

8. My district thinks they must buy bottled water for each student because we turned the water fountains off. Is this true? Do you think the waiver will go through and when?

MDE has applied for the waiver. The USDA has 60 days to approve or deny. Bottled water is a question for your local health department. Every district will have different rules to follow based on the local health department.

9. Plexiglass is not required for prepackaged meals in the classroom, but it is required to have plexiglass in the service area for pre-packaged meals. What is the difference?

Any questions about meal service safety and procedures should be discussed with the health department. Each local health department might have different rules for student/staff safety.

Pick-Up Meals

10. If we have Face to face and Parent pick up, will we need rosters for verification for one meal served?

Yes, you will need to verify one meal per student per day. Rosters or a POS system must be used, and a procedure should be created.

11. How will Head Start students enroll their child in a school's roster to be able to pick-up meals? Do we have to provide delivery for online students?

You do not have to offer delivery, but meals need to be made available if the Head Start Program is a district run program.

12. If we have grab and go meals offered for students learning remotely, do we have to do straight serve or can we offer some components at pickup (such as milk)?

You must use straight serve. Students must have a complete, reimbursable meal for remote learning.

13. How do we charge the meals that are picked up for multiple days when the POS only allows one meal per day?

You will have to work with your POS system administration to ensure the electronic system allows for claiming one meal per student per meal per day even with multiple meal distribution.

14. When you do curbside pick-up at 1 location only with rosters, is it acceptable to have more than 1 pickup time to accommodate working parents?

Yes, you could create a pick-up procedure that makes sense for your staff, households, and students. The roster will help verify that all students are enrolled in your district. Constant communication with parents/households will help streamline the pick-up process.

15. How do we indicate in CNAP offer versus serve when on-site but not for remote service?

Select Offer vs. Serve in the CNP application. As OVS is not allowed for parent pick-up or take-home meals, we will know you only mean OVS for congregate meal service (cafeteria, classroom, grab-n-go).

16. Is offer vs. serve REQUIRED for onsite service still if you are not CEP?

No, OVS is not required for on-site meal service. It is always optional for breakfast and optional for lunch for students in grades K-8. Grades 9-12 is optional for lunch for SY 2020-2021 only.

17. Is it acceptable to tell families who are doing online learning to order and pick up meals at a school location? We could have 30-40 students doing online by choice.

Yes, it is acceptable to create an ordering system and set up parent pick-up options. It is recommended to consider meal distribution at one or two sites instead of every district building to allow for easier access to meals. Pre-order and pre-pay systems are also recommended to help control waste.

18. If our building high school has alternate agreements with elementary schools, can we have one central location for lunch pick up and/or afterschool enrichment.

Yes, you can have a single site for parent pick up. You should consider families that drive and create a procedure to streamline the meal service process.

19. If delivering by bus for virtual learning, do we have to list each drop site on CNAP?

No, in the CNP School Nutrition Program MEGS+ 2021 application, you do not need to list bus routes. You will claim students based on which building they are enrolled in, which is why using a roster is so important. You must know in which building each student is enrolled.

Universal Free Breakfast

20. Is universal breakfast funded by a grant that we must apply for? My district had a grant last year for this.

Universal Breakfast is not a grant that has to be applied for. Any NSLP sponsor may elect to run this program. Grant funds can always be used to cover costs, if available.

- 21. Are 'full pay students' eligible to receive Universal Free Breakfast as well?**
Yes, Universal Breakfast is available for all students. Breakfasts are claimed as free, reduced-price, and paid but are free for all students. The reduced-price and paid meal costs may be paid by the non-profit food service fund.

Counting and Claiming

- 22. Please clarify CEP districts can or cannot use count sheets?**
For on-site meal service, you can see the child taking the meal and you can use count sheets. For offsite or parent pick-up meals, you need a way to determine that all students are enrolled in the district and are only picking up one meal per child per meal per day (multiple meals are allowed up to five instructional days a week).
- 23. How can we count/claim if we have school 4 days in-person and 1 day remotely?**
Each district will have to come up with a counting and claiming procedure to ensure one meal per student per meal per day. Students should be claimed in the building they are enrolled, and rosters must be used. You can claim five days of meals if you have five instructional days of school each week (four in-person and one virtual).
- 24. To clarify, if we have only 4 days on the schedule for student learning, we can only send home 4 days of meals, correct?**
Correct. If there are only four instructional days each week (in-person and/or virtual), only four meals per student per meal (breakfast and lunch) may be claimed.
- 25. If we start on a Monday with a Hybrid and some students will not come to school until later in the week, will we be able to serve those students prior to breakfast on Monday to make sure they get all their day's school meals?**
Yes, you can claim meals for all instructional days. This might mean you send meals home on Fridays for the following week. Each district will have a different approach.
- 26. Regarding in-district students attending out of district schools, am I responsible for providing those meals?**
You are required to provide meals for those students who attend your district.
- 27. Can we use sites used for SFSP as pickup sites for parents if we use a roster and can show that the students are enrolled in the district? Sites such as apartment complex buildings? We are thinking of various ways to provide meals to our students.**
Yes, you can use alternate sites for meal distribution. Consider what makes the most sense for your district and households in the area. You will claim students in the building they are enrolled which is why rosters are needed.

Learning at a Distance

28. In Phase 3, 2, or 1 will it switch to USC and be able to provide meals to anyone under the age of 18?

No, Phase 1-3 must include a way to virtually feed students under NSLP. Unanticipated School Closure (USC) SFSP will not be used during Phase 1-3.

29. We are going to use wireless tablets that link into our POS system. It will track what meals were served and on what days for remote learning pick up meals.

This is great, if you can keep track of daily meal counts and ensure one meal per child per meal (breakfast and lunch) per day is claimed.

30. For students learning at a distance, can we provide more than one meal at a time?

Yes, waivers are in place. Breakfast and lunch may be offered for up to five days (instructional days only). Think through what the kids can physically handle taking home. Creating a procedure for off-site students will help streamline the process. Take home meals, parent pick-up, and delivery are all options.

31. If students learning at a distance are set up in a separate school and the district does not have a site number yet, how do we claim meals? Also, if we have scheduled half days, can we send home lunch and claim?

All sites must be set up in the Educational Entity Master (EEM), and you must have a site number to claim meals. All remote learning students will be claimed in the building they are enrolled. You can serve lunch on half days by either using instructional time and serve meals before the end of the school day or sending meals home with students.

32. Do nonpublic schools have to provide lunches if there is remote learning?

There is no state mandated requirement, but we strongly recommend offering meals to all students.

33. Our district is possibly offering in-school learning and then giving families an option to do all remote learning if they choose to. Just to clarify, if they choose this option, we are still required to serve these students meals as well, correct?

Correct. All K-12 public schools must offer meals to all students for all instructional days, regardless of in-person or remote learning options. Each district will have to come up with their own procedure.

34. Can we feed students learning at a distance 5 breakfast and lunch meals?

Yes. You can feed students for every instructional day, up to five days a week.

35. During hybrid weeks when students will attend 2 days in person and 3 days remotely, can we feed them 3 days of breakfast and lunch meals?

Yes. You can feed students for every instructional day, up to five days a week. This can be a combination of in-person and remote instruction and meals can be served on-site or as take home/parent pick-up meals.

Snow Days

36. Are we required to serve meals on fog or snow days when children will be attending remotely?

For any instructional days, meals must be offered. Each district will have to determine what will happen with snow days or other school closures. Factors to consider will include staff contracts and union labor laws (if staff are not required to work on snow days, meals would not have to be offered). Every district will have a different approach.

37. So, we have a snow day, and students are still doing e-learning, do we need to provide meals? It will create a huge problem with employees under union contract.

Union contracts should always be followed. Meals should be available for students, regardless of in-person or virtual learning plans. For snow days, when a union contract says staff are not required to work, meals are not expected. We understand this will be slightly different for every district.

CEP

38. If we are a CEP district, are we required to provide breakfast as well as lunch for any scenario the district decides?

Yes, you must still provide breakfast and lunch regardless of the in-person or virtual learning provided by the district.

Training/Conference/Town Hall

39. Can we get any CEU's for the town hall meetings?

Yes, the Town Hall meeting will count for professional standards. As usual, you will keep track of all training hours.

Fiscal

40. What do we charge students if we have the K-8 nutrition waiver if we have tiered pricing?

When your meal service model includes meal service on site in the cafeteria or in the classroom, you must use the district's normal meal pricing per building for those onsite meals. You will also be following the correct meal pattern based on the age/grade group of each building.

If you are serving all grade levels at the same time through parent pick-up or via meal delivery, with students in Kindergarten through 12th grade receiving the same

meal (K-8 meal pattern approved exemption), we recommend charging the average price between all standard price points. Or charging the middle school price to all students.

Using the middle school price point is appropriate for:

- Covering the K-8 meal pattern.
- Helps offset additional costs of grab-n-go meals.
- Helps offset other factors impacting product and labor costs during the pandemic.
- Meeting Paid Lunch Equity (PLE) compliance; PLE regulations (7 CFR 210.14(e)) still apply. Otherwise future required price increases could be multiplied.
- Using a meal price too low can result in Resource Management Review findings for PLE.
- A lower price point could also cause financial struggles for the Food Service Fund which could become a burden on the General Fund.

41. Has the waiver that allows our lunch and breakfast pricing to stay the same and not have to raise them (even though the PLE says to) been approved?

This is not a waiver but there is a PLE exemption for all sponsors with a positive fund balance as of December 31, 2019.

42. Can you explain what we must claim in May with details?

For CEP, you will enter student enrollment per building. For non-CEP buildings, you will enter free and reduced-price eligible students and student enrollment for the month of May. Future claims cannot be certified if May is not updated.

43. Do we also have to update the eligibility for April and June?

No. Submitting and certifying claims is only necessary for the month of May. We are collecting eligibility data for the end of the 2019-2020 school year and decided to collect May data.

44. If we entered zero meals claim for May that contained F&R data as well as enrollment, are we all set?

Yes, if it is certified/submitted.

45. After you change the claim for May with enrollment data it says "on hold, certified after deadline" is this correct?

Correct. The claims will be released by MDE after you certify.

46. How can I give teachers free meals, can I use the A la Carte revenue?

No, you cannot give teachers or other adults free meals unless they pay out of General Fund. If you do decide you would like to, you will need to fill out the Adult Pricing Worksheet to determine the price, count the number of meals served for the year, calculate how much they owe the NSFSA. Then we would need to see the money transfer in from General Fund on the General Ledger.

47. Should we update our meal charge policy?

Meal charging policies should be reviewed and updated annually under normal circumstances. We highly recommend updating your district's meal charge policy with consideration to the new service models that will be used during the pandemic. Here are some factors to consider:

- It may make sense to adjust the meal charging limits to match for example 5 days' worth of breakfast and lunch meals if they are served multiple meals at a time, once per week.
- Financial hardships of families during the pandemic, encourage free and reduced applications for those in need.
- Adopt policies that allow children to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused, minimize the identification of students with insufficient funds and maintain the financial integrity of the NSFSA.
- Widely communicate the policy to everyone. At minimum, all households must be notified in writing at the start of each school year and to any households that transfer into the school district during the school year.
- Specifics of the written meal charging policy is up to local control.
- Adjust the frequency of low and negative balance notices to families.

48. If meals are pre-ordered and not picked up, can the family be charged?

This would be up to local control. Here are some factors to consider:

- This should be included in the meal charge policy.
- Charging for meals not picked up should be well communicated to families.
- Forecasting and menus should be flexible for adjustments in participation and to minimize waste.
- Meals pre-ordered but not picked up cannot be claimed for reimbursement.
- The a la carte price to charge for meals not picked up should be at least equal to the free reimbursement rate per meal type.

49. If the student is eligible for free or reduced meals but does not pick up pre-ordered meals, can they be charged a la carte pricing?

This would be up to local control. Here are some factors to consider:

- This should be included in the meal charge policy.
- Charging for meals not picked up should be well communicated to families.
- Forecasting and menus should be flexible for changes in participation and to minimize waste.
- Meals pre-ordered but not picked up cannot be claimed for reimbursement.
- The a la carte price to charge for meals not picked up should be at least equal to the free reimbursement rate per meal type.

MEGS+ Application

50. Can you clarify when the CNP is due? MEGS+ says October 15 but I hear it is due before August 1 for districts serving in August?

The federal deadline date is October 15 of each year. To submit any claims for reimbursement, your MEGS+ application must be approved by MDE. We recommend submitting the MEGS+ application as soon as possible to allow our staff time to review and approve.