



SCHOOL FOOD CHECKLIST FOR COVID-19

We appreciate how many changes schools are having to make to keep children and staff safe. This checklist is designed particularly for schools who self-manage their catering provision. It is to help school leaders and their catering teams make decisions that are right for their schools so that pupils can continue to benefit from good, nutritious school food.

With careful thought and planning, it should still be possible to make sure that school lunchtime is an enjoyable experience, time spent sharing good food with peers and teachers.

This checklist should be used in conjunction with other issued guidance and advice, especially around social distancing, food safety guidance specific to COVID-19 and enhanced cleaning regimes in schools. It is critical that it is used in conjunction with the school's risk assessment policies. See links at the end of this document.

The headteacher and catering staff should meet in order to:

- Ensure the kitchen team is included in school-wide planning and briefings on how the school will manage COVID-19 safety.
- Gain commitment to provide a hot school meal each day, even if this is not possible straight away. If alternative measures are to be put in place temporarily, agree how the kitchen team can best support this.
- Confirm how many pupils are likely to be returning to school and when.
- Establish the roles of lunchtime supervisors and other school staff in supporting school food.
- Agree how plans for school food will be communicated to pupils and parents.
- Make washing hands the school mantra for everyone.

Planning the food offer:

- Plan to provide a simple lunch menu, with one main meal, one vegetarian (or vegan) option and fruit or yoghurt for pudding.
- Check your food suppliers are able to deliver to your revised schedule. Agree ordering and delivery protocols (we suggest no entry to kitchen areas, delivery boxes unpacked and wiped before storage, items date stamped etc).
- Look at how you can make changes to the meal service. Set up serving stations and clearly mark out your dining area for queuing, service, seating and waste/clearing stations.
- For breakfast and break services, keep this offer simple, with minimal choices that can be served, rather than self-service.
- Consider staggering mealtimes for different year groups if you are not able to maintain social distancing in queues or with individual seating stations in your dining area.
- Consider whether eating in classrooms is a viable option, but ensure collection and delivery adheres to strict sanitation, food safety and temperature monitoring controls.

- If you do not have the time or resource to make the required changes in time for school re-opening, then consider providing packed lunches as a temporary measure. Remember that these must still meet the required school food standards.
- We would discourage allowing students to bring in food from home but if they do, consideration must be given to ensuring lunch boxes and water bottles are appropriately disinfected.
- Have contingency plans in place in case of staff sickness.
- Think about what food you can offer children entitled to free school meals who cannot attend school due to staggered re-entry, self-isolation or other reasons.

The week before re-opening:

- A deep clean must take place, especially if your kitchen has been closed or used for alternative provision. Consider using reputable cleaning contractors.
- Check all equipment (cookers, fridges, hobs) are working correctly. Check gas and water supply. Check waste systems are flushed and treated. Use relevant professional contractors where appropriate.
- Check IT and software systems (such as payment systems).
- Ensure your dishwasher is in good working order and reaching a suitable temperature to adequately sanitise plates and cutlery.
- Consider staffing levels that are possible in your kitchen whilst ensuring safe social distancing, keeping workstations 2m apart whenever possible. Where a 2m distance is not possible, consider what extra PPE (e.g. face masks) is needed, and recommend staff work side by side or with backs to each other.
- Ensure the kitchen is well ventilated, with windows kept open whilst occupied, and ventilation systems in good order. Use fly screens.
- Use floor tape to mark out specific areas in the kitchen for certain members of staff.
- Implement a one-way movement system where possible.
- Order any required PPE equipment or clothing that is needed, especially cleaning materials, disposable aprons, gloves and face masks.

- Put in place good signage throughout the kitchen to explain any new advice on what staff should and shouldn't do.
- Check that you have sufficient stocks of detergent, disinfectant, sanitiser and hand sanitiser (minimum 60% alcohol) to manage an enhanced cleaning regime.
- Install any additional handwashing and sanitation equipment and agree new protocols to be put in place.
- Update your HACCAP or COSHH protocols – and check in with your Environmental Health Officer if needed. We recommend a kitchen specific risk assessment for managing the risk of COVID-19 infection.
- Make sure the entire kitchen and midday supervision teams are briefed on the plan and actions that are required of them!

Looking after staff:

- Ask your teams to complete a 'Return to Work' survey.
- If you have larger teams, consider your staffing rotas in order to reduce contact. Shift patterns can be staggered to minimise the number of staff in the kitchen, with preparation and cleaning taking place consecutively, for example.
- Staff should change into clean uniforms outside the kitchen in a designated changing area, one staff member at a time. If possible, arrange to wash uniforms on site or else ensure they are put into a separate bag to be taken home to wash.
- Consideration should be given as to how to manage staff in high risk categories, or those with family members who are shielding. Managing this should be discussed and agreed in line with the school-wide policy.
- Be aware of your team's mental health during this time. Ensure you make time to have open discussions about how risk is being managed to help alleviate any anxiety.
- No personal items should be brought into the kitchen.

Daily kitchen tasks:

- Hand wash often and after tasks! Disposable gloves are not a substitute for hand washing.
- Use two stage cleaning and a clean-as-you-go policy at all times. First use detergent, then sanitise using manufacturer guidance.
- Appropriate PPE (including aprons and disposable gloves) should be worn at all times. Use fresh PPE when moving from kitchen to other school areas.
- Make sure all hand-contact surfaces (including handles, doors, taps, light switches, telephones, storage bins etc) are cleaned regularly throughout the day.
- Maintain existing HACCP/COSHH protocols (e.g. fridge and freezer temperatures).

Daily service:

- All pupils and staff to hand-wash/use sanitiser on entering and leaving the dining room.
- Ensure you have meal orders in advance and ensure allergens/special diets are catered for.
- Remove self-service items.
- Fit sneeze screens where appropriate.
- Have meals (and any salad items) served on a plate by staff (either kitchen, teaching or midday supervisors) which can then be taken to seated children, or collected using social distancing.
- Have a member of staff hand out cutlery and cups for water.
- Only consider using eco-disposable plates and cutlery if dishwashing is not practical.
- Ensure clearing and waste stations enable social distancing. Place plates and cutlery into disinfectant bowls. Make sure no food waste returns to the kitchen.
- If unable to set up a remote payment system, use look-up functions where possible and, as a last resort, where using biometric systems is unavoidable, ensure any finger or thumb payment systems are wiped down after every use.

Brought in or transported meals:

- Make sure that vehicles used for transporting meals are clean and disinfected and that drivers wear appropriate PPE and follow sanitation processes.
- Ensure any external packaging, surfaces and handles are wiped down with sanitiser on delivery.
- Cleaning of all transported equipment (such as hot boxes, cool boxes etc) must be carried out at the beginning of the day, before packing and after deliveries.
- Hotboxes and all light equipment to be taken straight to the serving point to reduce risk of contamination.

Links and further information:

- Department for Education Guidance - <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/reopening-and-adapting-your-food-business-during-covid-19>
- Food Standards agency - <https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/reopening-and-adapting-your-food-business-during-covid-19>
- Gov.UK guidance on restaurants offering take-away: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery>
- School Food Plan Alliance – <http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/contact/>

Notes:

The School Food Plan Alliance brings together leading organisations with an interest in school food. Independent of any government funding, the School Food Plan Alliance is the on-going champion for the School Food Plan's vision and its 17 actions. See www.schoolfoodplan.com/contact

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