

To: All Child Nutrition Sponsors Serving Meals During the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Ordered School-Building Closure

From: Brigette Hires, Child Nutrition Program Manager
Office of Integrated Student Supports

Date: March 30, 2020

Re: Parent, Guardian or Agency Meal Pickup without Children Present

Purpose

This policy provides guidance to child nutrition sponsors to allow parent or guardian meal pickup during the coronavirus (COVID-19) meal distribution process.

Overview

Under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act at 42 U.S.C. 1761(f)(3) and program regulations at 7 CFR 210.10(a), 220.2 (Breakfast) and 220.8(a), 225.2 (Meals), 225.9(d)(7), and 226.2 (Meals), meals must be served to eligible children. The act and cited regulations envision program operators providing meals directly to children, not parents and guardians picking up meals at non-congregate meal sites on behalf of their children. However, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service recognizes that during this public health emergency, continuing to require children to come to meal sites to pick up meals may not be practical or in the best interest of community health. In keeping with the goal of providing meals while taking appropriate safety measures, on March 25, 2020, the USDA issued a nationwide waiver permitting parent or guardian pickup of meals for children.^{1,2}

Policy

While distributing meals for children to parents or guardians, child nutrition sponsors must maintain program integrity. To maintain program integrity, sponsors must implement the following activities specified by the USDA, including:

- Ensuring marketing materials and communications for feeding sites clearly indicate meals are for children only;
- Ensuring marketing materials and communications for feeding sites do not openly indicate parents or guardians can pick up meals without children present;
- Limiting the number of meals per site a parent or guardian can pick up without the child present. Site personnel should be aware of the household composition, when possible.

If a community organization, such as a homeless shelter, wishes to pick up meals for children, the organization must provide an official documented request, such as a letter on letterhead. The request must include the number of children and number of meals. The sponsor must keep this documentation in accordance with its records retention policies.

Duration

This policy is effective immediately and remains in effect until June 30, 2020, or until expiration of the federally declared public health emergency, whichever is earlier.

Contact the Office of Integrated Student Supports with questions at (614) 466-2945 or child.nutrition@education.ohio.gov.