

MASSACHUSETTS SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS

SHARE TABLE SNAPSHOT

Guidance & essential details on page 2

WHAT IS A SHARE TABLE?



- A share table is an area where students can leave unopened cafeteria-provided food items for others to take.
- A bowl, bus bin, cooler with ice, or refrigerator can be used to hold the food and keep refrigerated items at safe temperatures.
- Share tables can be set up near the condiments & utensils, after the register, or at the start of the waste sorting station.
- Share tables need to be monitored/managed to ensure only acceptable items are left, and determine how they will be handled at the end of the lunch periods.

WHY IS THERE FOOD TO SHARE?

- The goal of food and nutrition services in schools is to provide nutritious food to all students (so they can be healthy and ready to learn).
- School meals are reimbursable to districts when students take a full meal.
- A full meal consists of designated serving sizes of 5 components: dairy, grain, protein, fruit, and vegetables.
- USDA allows schools to participate in the Offer vs. Serve program.
- A full lunch meal consists of designated serving sizes of 5 components: dairy, grain, protein, fruit, and vegetables. Students must select at least 3 items. A full breakfast meal consists of designated serving sizes of 4 items from three meal components: fruits and/or vegetables, grains and/or meats/meat alternates, and fluid milk. Students must select at least 3 food items including one 1/2 cup of fruits or vegetables.
- Some students do not wish to eat the full meal and end up throwing away items.
- Even so, students unfortunately still regularly discard food such as milk cartons, whole fruits, and packaged items.
- These items can be safely shared with other students or even returned to the cafeteria for redistribution one time.

ALLOWABLE FOODS

- Must be cafeteria-provided item
- Unopened pre-packaged items
- Whole pieces of fruit with a peel
- Unopened milk in a cooling bin maintained at 41°F or below.



UNALLOWABLE FOODS

- Foods from home or food not provided by the School Meal Programs.
- Unpackaged, opened, and/or packaged items that can be opened and resealed.
- Perishable foods, when a temperature control mechanism is not in place.



Learn more at TheGreenTeam.org.

Adapted from USDA memo SP 41-2016:
The Use of Share Tables in Child Nutrition Programs.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

