

FOOD SHARE TABLE FAQ'S

Following are Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) regarding the use of Food Share Tables at schools:

Q1: What exactly are school food share tables?

A1: School food Share Tables are designated stations where children may return whole and/or unopened food or beverage items they choose not to eat or drink. These items are then made available to other children who may want or need another serving during or after meal service.

Q2: What foods and beverages are acceptable on Share Tables?

A2: According to Section 114079 c) (2) of the revised California Health and Safety Code*, the following items may be placed on Share Tables:

- **Pre-packaged, non-potentially hazardous food with the packaging still intact and in good condition**
 - For example: Packets of mayonnaise, ketchup, hot sauce, mustard, etc. Pre-packaged granola bars, crackers, cookies, boxed raisins, etc.
- **Whole uncut produce without an edible peel**
 - For example: Whole oranges and bananas
- **Whole uncut produce with an edible peel – Special Handling Required**
 - For example: Whole apples and pears
 - **Special Handling:** Whole fruit with edible peels CAN be returned to a Share Table, but should not be made available for another student to take during the meal period. This fruit must be sent back to the kitchen to be re-washed prior to being available to students.
- **Unopened bags of sliced fruit or vegetables**
 - For example: Unopened bags of apple slices or baby carrots
- **Unopened dairy products** - If placed in a cooling bin maintained at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below
 - For example: Unopened containers of milk, yogurt, string cheese, etc.
 - Use a bin with ice or ice pack/blue ice
- **Perishable pre-packaged food** – If placed in proper temperature controlled environment
 - For example: Pre-packaged salads placed on ice/blue ice (with dairy products, etc.)
 - For example: Pre-packaged hot entrée items placed on a warming tray (or something similar) to help maintain proper temperature



Q: Can food brought from home be placed on a Share Table?

A: NO. Food items placed on a Share Table must come from the District meal service and cannot come from someone's home or from a lunch brought from home, even if the food is commercially pre-packaged. Federal guidance requires that food and beverages placed on a Share Table come from reimbursable meals provided by the school nutrition program that meet specific meal pattern requirements.

Q: Do Share Tables have to be monitored?

A: YES. Kitchen staff, with support from cafeteria monitors and custodians, if available, should monitor the food share table periodically throughout the meal period and at the end of the last meals service. Share table monitors should make sure that students do not put unapproved items on the Share Table. For middle and high schools, the responsible person overseeing the share table can be students who volunteer for the task.

Q: What can we do with surplus food on the Share Table at the end of mealtime?

A: Items left on the Share Table may be served and claimed for reimbursement during another meal service** (i.e. during an afterschool program when left from a school lunch) if the Share Table is supervised by the food services staff; served a la carte, or used in cooking. Items used in another program's reimbursable meal would be considered a donation to the other program.

Share Table items may also be included with our "Love Food Not Waste" food rescue program.

*SB 557 enacted on January 1, 2018 amended both the California Health and Safety Code ("CalCode") as well as the Education Code. It also required the California Department of Education (CDE) Nutrition Services Division to publish guidance information on Share Tables and food donation programs in schools.

The CDE published the webpages below in accordance with SB 557:

- "The Use of Share Tables" – <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mbcnp032018.asp>
- "Guidance on the Donation of Leftover Food in Child Nutrition Programs (CNP's)" – <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sncnp022018.asp>

**Per USDA FNS Instruction 786-6, proper documentation of recycled meal components must be maintained. With regard to accountability for such recycled meal components, claims for reimbursement shall include data in sufficient detail to justify the reimbursement claimed. In addition, claims are subject to review or audit and must be substantiated by appropriate documentation. Therefore Local Educational Agencies should maintain some record of their daily use of purchased milk or other food items which are recycled.

Share Table resources can be found at: <https://www.sdusdsustainability.com/food-rescue-resources>