

# California Department of Education

## The Use of Share Tables

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### Nutrition Services Division Management Bulletin

**Purpose:** Policy, Beneficial Information

**To:** Child Nutrition Program Sponsors

**Attention:** School Nutrition Program and Child and Adult Care Food Program Sponsors

**Number:** CNP-03-2018

**Date:** February 2018

**Reference:** Senate Bill 557; California Department of Education Management Bulletin CNP-02-2018: Guidance on the Donation of Leftover Food in Child Nutrition Programs; Title 7, *Code of Federal Regulations*, sections 210.13, 220.7, 225.16(a), and 226.20(l); U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service Instruction 786-6; U.S. Department of Agriculture Policy Memorandum SP 41-2016, CACFP 13-2016, SFSP 15-2016: The Use of Share Tables in Child Nutrition Programs California *Health and Safety Code*, sections 113739, 113756, 113757, 113781, 113789, 113871, 113897, 113996, 114000, and 114079; California *Education Code* Section 49580; California Department of Education Management Bulletin CNP-03-2018

**Supersedes:** California Department of Education Management Bulletin CNP-04-2016

**Subject:** The Use of Share Tables

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This management bulletin provides guidance regarding the use of share tables in Child Nutrition Programs (CNP) and includes updated information from Senate Bill 557 signed into law and effective January 1, 2018.

#### Share Tables and Recycled Milk

In an effort to reduce food waste and encourage the consumption of food served, many food service operations have established share tables. Share tables are carts or tables where children can place unconsumed food and beverage items (i.e., prepackaged food and beverages; unopened, wrapped food and beverages; or food items with a peel) that they choose to not eat or drink. These tables provide an opportunity for other children to take additional helpings of food or beverages at no cost. Under certain circumstances, both state law and federal guidance allow food and beverage items to be reused by food service operations as part of a reimbursable meal, served a la carte, or used in cooking. For more information see U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Policy Memorandum SP 41-2016 Web page at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/use-share-tables-child-nutrition-programs>. Food and beverage items can also be donated to a nonprofit organization. For more information, see management bulletin CNP-02-2018, Guidance on the Donation of Leftover Food in CNPs located on the California Department of Education (CDE) School Nutrition Programs (SNP) MB Web page at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/sn/mb.asp>.

Recycled meal components served and/or claimed for reimbursement must be properly documented and maintained as outlined in USDA FNS Instruction 786-6. Although the USDA FNS Instruction 786-6 and Policy Memo SP 41-2016 permit the use of share tables and recycling of food and beverages, including milk, **this practice is only acceptable when in compliance with applicable state and local health and safety codes.**

In California *Retail Food Code (CalCode)*, Section 114079, a local educational agency (LEA) may do both of the following to minimize waste and to reduce food insecurity:

- Provide sharing tables where food service staff, pupils, and faculty may return appropriate food items consistent with *CalCode*, Section 114079 and make those food items available to pupils during the course of a regular school mealtime.
- Allow the food placed on the sharing tables that is not taken by a pupil during the course of a regular school mealtime in accordance with the *CalCode*, Section 114079, subparagraph (A), to be donated to a food bank or any other nonprofit charitable organization.

Donations of food or food made available to pupils during the course of a regular school mealtime may include prepackaged, nonpotentially hazardous food with the packaging still intact and in good condition, whole uncut produce that complies with the *CalCode*, Section 113992, before donation, unopened bags of sliced fruit, unopened containers of milk that are immediately stored in a cooling bin maintained at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below, and perishable prepackaged food (if it is placed in a proper temperature-controlled environment).

Additionally, when an LEA makes food available to pupils during the course of a regular school mealtime or donates food to a food bank or any other nonprofit charitable organization for distribution, the preparation, safety, and donation of food shall be consistent with *CalCode*, Section 113980.

**Please note that the definitions and terms used in this management bulletin are outlined in the *CalCode*, which is available on the California Department of Public Health, Retail Food Program Web page**

**at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CEH/DFDCS/Pages/FDBPrograms/FoodSafetyProgram/RetailFoodProgram.aspx>. For further guidance and information, please contact your local environmental health department.**

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) agencies, please be advised that the USDA only permits share tables for the At-risk Afterschool Meals component of the CACFP.

### **Best Practices for Child Nutrition Programs to Help Reduce Food Waste**

- **Offer versus Serve**

Food service operations with increased food costs (due to waste and food discarded from share tables) may want to consider implementing offer versus serve (OVS). OVS is a provision with two major goals: (1) reduce food waste in CNPs, and (2) permit children to select only the foods they want to consume. OVS allows students to decline components during a breakfast, lunch, or supper service. The number of components that can be declined at each meal service is contingent on the CNP the agency operates. OVS is only permitted under some circumstances in the CACFP. CACFP agencies should contact their specialist to determine if they are eligible to implement OVS. While OVS is required for lunch at the high school level for the National School Lunch Program, it is optional for all other grade levels. As stated earlier, implementing OVS is intended to decrease the amount of food and beverage waste; therefore, decreasing the amount of food on share tables.

- **Placement of Share Tables**

Placement of the share table at the end of a serving line (rather than in a cafeteria) can improve the supervision of the share table by food service staff; therefore, ensuring that food contamination is reduced or eliminated.

- **Reuse of Items Left on the Share Table**

Food or beverage items left on the share table may be served and claimed for reimbursement during another meal service (i.e., during an afterschool program when leftover from a school lunch), if the share table is supervised by the food service staff. Food or beverage items left on the share table may also be used in another program's reimbursable meal and would be considered a donation to the other

program. **Please keep in mind that this practice is only acceptable when in compliance with applicable state and local health and safety codes.** For further guidance and information, please contact your local environmental health department.

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 LEAs should maintain some record of their daily use of purchased milk or other food items which are recycled.

- **Residential Child Care Institutions, Schools, or Agencies Serving Family Style Meals**

Many agencies, including residential child care institutions, serve meals family style, where all food and menu items are placed on the table where students are eating, and students are allowed to serve themselves second helpings of food or menu items. When family style meals are served, all food items on the table must be discarded at the end of the meal service and not reserved as part of another reimbursable meal.

- **Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points Plan for School Districts**

In order to assist local enforcement agencies with routine food safety inspections, the CDE Nutrition Services Division strongly recommends that school districts include the guidelines for share tables in their food service operation's Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points plan, and provide proper food safety and food handling training to employees.

## **Contact Information**

If you have any questions regarding this subject, please contact your SNP, CACFP, or Summer Meals Unit (SMU) Specialist.

**SNP:** Ashley Osterman, Child Nutrition Consultant (CNC), Northern SNP Unit, by phone at 916-445-1261 or by e-mail at [aosterman@cde.ca.gov](mailto:aosterman@cde.ca.gov) or Lori Porter, CNC, Southern SNP Unit, by phone at 916-322-1454 or by e-mail at [lporter@cde.ca.gov](mailto:lporter@cde.ca.gov).

**CACFP:** Nancy Charpentier, Office Technician (OT), by phone at 916-327-2991 or by e-mail at [ncharpentier@cde.ca.gov](mailto:ncharpentier@cde.ca.gov).

**SMU:** Larry Frakes, OT, by phone at 916-322-8323 or by e-mail at [lfrakes@cde.ca.gov](mailto:lfrakes@cde.ca.gov).

**Questions: Nutrition Services Division | 800-952-5609**

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