SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES

School cafeterias are a location where face coverings cannot be used to mitigate the six-foot physical distancing requirement. This issue creates significant challenges for school administrators, who should work with the EPAs, BIE School Operations, and safety staff, for suitable school-specific mitigation strategies.

- Schools should consider having students eat their meals in small, controlled settings, e.g., classrooms, rather than cafeterias.

- Students are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings in the cafeteria or food service area and conform to tribal government or local health authority rules or regulations for face coverings, except when eating.

- All persons in the cafeteria or food service area will maintain physical distancing while in the serving line and throughout the table seating area.

- Cafeteria and food service workers are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings, and conform to tribal government or local health authority rules or regulations for face coverings. They may be required to wear appropriate personal protective equipment at all times while in the cafeteria or food service area.

- The return of unopened food or drinks is prohibited.

- Tray counters and condiment areas will be sanitized between serving periods.

- Cafeteria flavor stations should be removed and replaced with single use packets (e.g., no ketchup bottles).

- During meal times it will be especially important to encourage excellent handwashing hygiene and consistent physical distancing precautions, along with modified scheduling and delivery service models to reduce large gatherings.

- Mealtime in cafeteria or food service area:
  - Stagger mealtimes to minimize the number of individuals dining inside at one time and keep six feet apart.
  - Require students to wash hands thoroughly prior to mealtimes.
  - Restrict mixing student groups during mealtimes.
  - Determine if markings for spacing and flow through hallways, cafeterias or meal service areas, and open seating areas are required; and if so, install.
• Food Delivery Models:

  ▪ Avoid traditional cafeteria or meal service area line model, if feasible.

  ▪ Create pre-order format which students can select in the morning or that parents/guardians can select online.

  ▪ Coordinate food and nutrition service operations with teachers and school leaders to determine logistics, packaging, transport, and food safety for student meals in the classroom.

  ▪ Wherever feasible, encourage bag lunches from home.

  ▪ For those who cannot bring lunches from home, use grab-and-go model for breakfast, lunch, and/or other meals served.

  ▪ Pre-plate each meal to avoid multiple people using the same utensils.

  ▪ Consider serving meals outside or in an alternative indoor area(s) to maximize physical distancing as weather permits.

• Custodial Staff:

  ▪ Clean and disinfect surfaces between groups in the cafeteria or food service area when used.