

**COVID-19 School Closure Q&A Between  
[LunchAssist](#) and CDE  
March 13, 2020**

**If school remains open:**

**Q:** *Are there any flexibilities for SFA's that remain open? Schools are experiencing staffing shortages, requests to serve meals in the classroom, and supply chain shortages on packaged foods. In particular will CDE/USDA consider lifting the requirement for vegetable subgroups? Many schools have a model built around salad bar meal service and have been asked to stop salad bars. It is simple to source "red/orange" and "other" veggies in individual packages. However, beans/peas and starchy items are not available in individual packages (we've been calling around). This means that schools would need to portion them into cups or bags, which due to staffing and supply shortages is becoming very difficult.*

**CDE Answer:** At this time, there is no waiver for the meal pattern. CDE has requested additional flexibility but it has not been approved.

**Q:** *A few schools have been asked to stop meal service in the cafeteria to avoid large groups of students gathering in the cafeteria (per Governor Newsom's guidance to avoid gatherings of 250 or more). The Superintendent has asked them to serve in the Classroom. We are concerned that meal counting will be non-compliant. Will there be any flexibility in the point of service meal count procedures?*

**CDE Answer:** Classroom feeding is allowable but must comply with all standard meal counting procedures.

**Q:** *For schools that have Administrative Review site visits in the coming weeks, will field services be adjusting review schedules or deadlines? Will CDE be stopping non-essential domestic travel as recommended by the Governor yesterday?*

**CDE Answer:** No decision as of today. If you have a review scheduled and school is closed it could be rescheduled but that is up to Field Services. Please contact the reviewer.

**If school buildings close but instruction continues - ie: school is "open" through e-Learning:**

**Q:** *Does the state meal mandate remain in effect if the school switches to e-learning? ie - Do schools still have an obligation to make meals available if the school is happening online. These schools would be collecting attendance dollars.*

**CDE Answer:** Per EC 49550, no – if school is open online but the building is closed then the school does not have to feed students, but this issue is pending and guidance may be updated.

**Q:** *In this case, where school is technically happening online, does the school qualify for the emergency feeding waiver? Or should they serve under the regular SNP guidelines?*

**CDE Answer:** If the school site building is closed, they can apply for a waiver to feed the children under SSO or SFSP.

**Q:** *Is there anything different that needs to be done if school's building closes but instruction occurs from home?*

**CDE Answer:** Same as last question – if the building is closed then the school is not obligated to feed the students under EdCode, but if they choose to feed them they may do so by completing a waiver request.

**If a school closes but the SFA has never operated a summer meal program in the past:**

**Q:** *Can they submit the waiver to operate under the SSO or SFSP?*

**CDE Answer:** Yes, but if they have not done SFSP in the past two years, they would apply to SSO.

**If a school closes and the SFA operated SSO last year but would prefer to operate the SFSP during the closure due to simplified meal patterns:**

*Q: Is this allowable? Or do they have to operate SSO during the closure?*

**CDE Answer:** No, they would have to operate SSO. They can apply for SFSP but there is an application process.

*Q: If they would like to operate SFSP in lieu of their usual SSO service (due to the simplified meal pattern) what is the process?*

**CDE Answer:** Apply for SFSP with the Summer Unit.

*Q: If the site has to follow the SSO, are there any menu flexibilities allowed other than those already outlined in SP 37-2015?*

**CDE Answer:** Not at this time. SSO programs must follow the NSLP/SBP meal pattern, including the vegetable subgroups.

*Q: If the site has to follow the SSO, how does the CDE recommend the two types of milk be offered in Grab n' Go meal service models?*

**CDE Answer:** Schools must follow the meal pattern; milk flexibility can be approved by the CDE. In a disaster schools can offer just one type of milk, or if they cannot get access to milk, they can serve meals without milk. This has already been approved related to the fires and would be applicable in COVID-19 school closures as well.

**If a school closes and the SFA does not offer any meal services:**

*Q: Will there be any financial relief to help with this disaster, similar to what was provided during school closure due to the fires?*

**CDE Answer:** Yes, they can file a disaster application. We encourage everyone to file this, however funds are limited and based on past experience funds have taken up to 1-2 years to be allocated by the government.