**Dining Guide for Meals in the Classroom (MIC)**

**Introduction**

Welcome to the ***Dining Guide for Meals in the Classroom***. If your plan is to serve all or some meals in the classroom (MIC) when schools reopen, this is likely to be a major adjustment for everyone in the building. This *Guide* has been developed to help you communicate your district or school procedures for serving in the classroom – whether it’s breakfast, lunch, supper and/or snacks – to your school partners.

Back to School 2020 meal service is likely to be as unprecedented as emergency feeding during spring school closures. As schools reopen following COVID-19 closures, districts will utilize different scenarios for feeding students that may vary by individual school sites. While some school nutrition teams may choose to feed all children all meals in the classroom, others may adopt blended plans where some students are eating in the cafeteria, some are eating the classroom, and some are taking meals home. At the time of this *Guide’s* development (July 2020), it seems clear that classroom dining will be commonplace for at least some students in most U.S. districts during SY 2020-21.

Eating school meals in the classroom already has a long – and very successful – history in districts where Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC) programs have been implemented. This *Guide* will draw extensively on those experiences and provide links to resources and best practices from those programs, especially those developed with support from Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom (PBIC): Food Research and Action Center, National Association of Elementary School Principals Foundation, The NEA Foundation, and School Nutrition Foundation, with generous support from the Walmart Foundation.

**How to use *Dining Guide for Meals in the Classroom***

This *Guide* was designed with a very specific purpose in mind:

* **To provide customizable templates that allow school nutrition teams to easily share their plans for meals in the classroom (MIC) with key audiences within their school community.**
* **This *Guide* is not intended to provide guidance or training for school nutrition department staff.** Development of policies, SOPs and training materials on best practices for MIC are still very much “in progress” as this resource was being created.
* **To use this *Guide* most effectively, you should already have district-specific plans and policies in place**. You can enter the top-line details into the appropriate section of each template and then share the document with the target audience group.

The templates are designed to include the most important need-to-know information. They do not include details like Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for safe food temperatures or when staff must wear gloves. If you needs new SOPs for MIC, check [www.schoolnutrition.org/MIC](http://www.schoolnutrition.org/MIC), where we have collected examples for you.

**Template descriptions and instructions:**

The ***Dining Guide for Meals in the Classroom*** includes several templates and one letter – all completely customizable.

* The templates include an overall MIC plan, which is a comprehensive template for all key MIC issues, plus individual templates for specific audiences: principals, teachers, paraprofessionals, school nurse/health professionals, school secretary/office staff and custodians/facilities staff.
* The letter, written in a more conversational format, is intended for parents and families. Each template is designed to help you easily create a 1- to 2-page handout.

There are two versions of each template, plus an instructional PDF for each version:

1. A **TABLE** template (Word docx) has customizable text areas highlighted in **yellow** with an Instructional (PDF) with suggested additions in red text
2. A **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)** template version (Word docx) also has customizable text areas highlighted in **yellow** with an Instructional template (PDF) with suggested additions in red text

The customization of these templates is easy using Microsoft Word on any computer. Simply follow these basic steps:

* Save the downloaded template – either **TABLE or FAQs** – onto your computer with a new file name.
* Remove “INSERT LOGO” in the top left of the template. Add your department, school or district LOGO into the box as a JPG or PNG file (resize as necessary to fit the box).
* Replace any text highlighted in yellow with personalized information about your program, using the instructional PDF for examples of the information that is appropriate to include.
* Add or delete rows in the **TABLE** or questions in **FAQs** in the template as necessary to ensure it reflects relevant and specific information about *your* program.

**TIPS FOR TEMPLATES:**

* **Remember: Most readers are busy**. They will be likely to skim the first page and may not take the time to read the second page or back of the handout. Keep the most important information in those first few rows on page 1.
* Keep the overall handout as brief as possible, using clear, simple sentences.
* Add only the most important, need-to-know information.
* Keep information consistent from template to template. For example, make certain that details about time to eat minutes are identical from template to template.

**Before finalizing any template, review the language to make certain that it is aligned with existing contract roles and responsibilities in your district.**

**Once the template is customized to your program with a clear AS OF DATE, save the file as a PDF.** You are now ready to share this PDF electronically or as a printed copy. **NOTE: DO not share an electronic copy of the Word.docx templates because they could be altered and could spread inaccurate information.**

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