



Food and
Nutrition
Service

Park Office
Center

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SUBJECT: Meal Service during Unanticipated School and Day Care Closures

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

The purpose of this memorandum is to clarify that meals may be served through the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) or the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Seamless Summer Option (SSO) during unanticipated school closures, including snow days, during the regular school year. For more detailed guidance regarding the operation of Child Nutrition Programs during emergency situations, see SP 46-2014, CACFP 12-2014, SFSP 18-2014, *Disaster Response*, May 19, 2014, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster-response-0>.

Schools and day care programs may face unanticipated closures due to extreme weather events, natural disasters, major building repairs, court orders relating to school safety or other issues, labor-management disputes, or other similar causes. Unanticipated closures prevent students and children enrolled in child care from receiving the nutritious meals normally provided. The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) encourages school food authorities (SFAs) participating in the NSLP and/or the School Breakfast Program, Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) institutions, and SFSP sponsors to use the flexibilities described below to help ensure that students do not experience a lapse in food security when extreme weather or other events force area schools or day care programs to close.

Using the Summer Meal Programs

The SFSP regulations at 7 CFR 225.6(e)(1)(iii) specifically allow the service of meals during the school year when there are unanticipated school closures. This flexibility is extended to the SSO through SP 37-2015, *2015 Edition of Questions and Answers for the National School Lunch Program's Seamless Summer Option*, May 22, 2015, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/2015-edition-qas-nslp%E2%80%99s-seamless-summer-option>. During unanticipated closures of schools or day care programs, State agencies and Program operators may determine that providing meals through SFSP or SSO is a feasible option. FNS recommends that SFAs and sponsors indicate on their SFSP and SSO applications whether or not they intend to serve meals should unforeseen events occur. If sponsors serve meals during unanticipated school closures, these meals are reimbursed at the appropriate free rates.

When unanticipated school closures occur, State agencies may exempt existing sponsors and SFAs from submitting new applications to participate if the sponsor participated in SFSP at any time during the current year or in either of the prior two calendar years (7 CFR 225.6(c)(1)). In addition, sponsors applying for participation in the Program due to an unanticipated school closure are exempt from the application submission deadline (7 CFR 225.6(b)(1)). Area eligibility requirements still apply for service during unanticipated school closures, except in certain disaster situations (see SP 46-2014, CACFP 12-2014, SFSP 18-2014, *Disaster Response*, May 19, 2014, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster-response-0>).

State agencies also may waive the requirement that, during unanticipated school closures, SFSP and SSO meals must be served at non-school sites. This would allow school sites to be used unless doing so would present a safety concern (7 CFR 225.6(d)(1)(iv)). For example, it is possible that schools could be closed due to snowy conditions in parking lots and on adjacent sidewalks in the early morning hours, but by lunchtime, the snow has been cleared allowing safe access to school buildings. Therefore, SFSP or SSO meals could be served once the conditions are safe for children to access the site.

Using the Child and Adult Care Food Program

State agencies also may allow at-risk afterschool centers to continue serving meals and snacks as part of the At-Risk Afterschool Meals component of CACFP during unanticipated school closures (7 CFR 226.17a(b)(1)). On days when schools are closed, at-risk afterschool centers that normally offer a snack and supper after school may instead choose to offer either lunch and a snack, or breakfast and a snack. These meals and snacks would be reimbursed through CACFP at the free rate. For more information about operating the At-Risk Afterschool Meals component of CACFP, see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/afterschool-programs>.

FNS appreciates the willingness of State agencies and Program operators to consider implementing the various options and flexibilities offered through the Federal Child Nutrition Programs to ensure that children receive the meals they need to remain healthy and active throughout the year.

State agencies are reminded to distribute this information to Program operators immediately. Program operators should direct any questions regarding this memorandum to the appropriate State agency. State agencies should direct questions to the appropriate FNS Regional Office.

Original Signed

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Child Nutrition Programs