

Nova Scotia Agriculture
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BREAKFAST PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The breakfast program has been in existence for many years and fulfills a needed service within our school system. It has been traditionally centered around providing a nutritional breakfast to children, however, it can include lunch and snacks.

As the breakfast program has been categorized as a not for profit operation, the involvement from the Food Safety Section has been that of operational advice and education of volunteers.

Due to the increase in the involvement in the breakfast program, it has become necessary to assist the operations by providing guidelines as to what is expected of the facilities despite the fact that a permit to operate is not required and routine inspections are not carried out.

In the situation where the breakfast program is carried out in an operating school cafeteria or in a nearby permitted church or similar approved facility, all routine inspections and permit requirements will remain in place as detailed in the Nova Scotia Food Safety Regulations.

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist those breakfast programs that are located in non-permitted facilities and are classified as “not for profit”. The intent is to put into place the proper food handling control measures and thereby reduce the risk of any food borne illnesses.

Note: In situations where breakfast programs are carried out in locations where equipment and facilities are lacking, the menu items should be limited to low risk foods that do not require on-site preparation or refrigeration.

Source of Food

- Food is to be obtained from approved sources such as retail or wholesale operations. If food is to be donated by families, it should be non-perishable products in their original packaging.
- Home canned foods, other than jams and jellies, are not permitted.
- Food in dented, rusted and bulging cans are not to be used. Food from cans without labels shall not be used.
- Meals prepared in home kitchens are not permitted, as they are from an unknown source and would include potentially hazardous foods. The means of preparation; cooking, hot and cold holding and transporting of these foods may put the children at risk.
- Low hazardous foods like whole fruit and vegetables, or baked goods such as muffins or cookies (without cream, custard or cream cheese filling or topping) may be brought into the facility by a parent or guardian. Acceptance is at the discretion of the staff.

- Fruits and vegetables must be washed before serving. Peeling and cutting should be done at the facility by staff.

General Facility Considerations

The food preparation area for the breakfast program should be a dedicated area where the food can be prepared in a safe and appropriate manner.

In the room where food is prepared:

- Floors, walls and ceilings should be of a washable nature and not pose any risks of contaminating food. Carpeted floors should be avoided.
- Lighting should be adequate to enable safe food handling and subsequent cleaning.
- A supply of potable, safe, drinkable water.
- Adequate washroom facilities available to food handlers and children.
- All counters and work surfaces are to be of a washable, easily maintainable material.
- Adequate food storage consisting of cupboards, shelving or a food storage room where food can be stored at least 6 inches above the floor.

Equipment

Overall equipment is dictated by the type and amount of food preparation being carried out.

- Refrigeration equipment capable of maintaining a temperature of 4⁰C (40⁰F) or less for all perishable food such as milk, eggs and similar protein foods. A thermometer should be present inside the refrigerator to allow monitoring of the correct temperature.
- A refrigerator dedicated for the breakfast program is recommended. If a shared refrigerator is necessary, then food intended for the breakfast program shall be identified and separated from other foods in the refrigerator. Foods must be stored in the refrigerator in a manner that prevents cross contamination.
- Stove, oven or similar equipment capable of heating foods to adequate cooking temperatures and maintaining hot food at a minimum temperature of 60⁰C (140⁰F).
- Utensils of plastic or metal construction of a size that can be easily washed (e.g. fit in sinks or dishwasher).
- Frozen foods shall be kept in a freezer unit capable of maintaining the food at a temperature of -18⁰C (0⁰F)

Handwashing

Handwashing is crucial in preventing contamination of food and disease transmission in the food service industry. All food preparation areas should have an available handwashing sink with hot and cold running water, equipped with liquid soap and paper towels in suitable dispensers.

Food handlers must wash their hands prior to preparing food and following any practices that would contaminate their hands such as:

- Coughing or sneezing or using a tissue

- Using the washroom
- Smoking
- Eating
- Handling raw meats
- Handling dirty dishes
- Handling chemicals
- Handling garbage or trash
- Touching hair or nose

In addition, proper handwashing practices should be reinforced with the children prior to eating. The children should be encouraged to wash their hands at available school facilities.

Dishwashing

Dishes and utensils must be washed and sanitized. This may be done by using a domestic dishwasher or through a three unit dishwashing procedure (wash, rinse, sanitize). For existing facilities with two compartment sink, a dish pan or other suitable container can be used for the third step.

When domestic dishwashers are used, a hot water sanitizing cycle with water temperature capable of reaching 63 C (145 F) is recommended. A detergent/sanitizer should be used. Most manufacturers require a minimum operating temperature of 60 C - 63 C (140 F-145 F) and provide a booster heater for the initial wash temperature and sanitizing rinse. Domestic dishwashers are not usually equipped by the manufacturer with a chemical feed for addition of sanitizers.

Domestic dishwashers are not recommended for large volumes of dishes and utensils where more than three loadings are necessary to wash all dishes from one meal. The average dishwasher cycle for domestic dishwashers is approximately one hour with an additional minute needed for each 0.5 C (1 F) rise in temperature. To heat water from 49 C to 63 C (120 F to 145 F) will require approximately an additional 25 minutes.

Food Handling Practices

Basic food handling practices are centered around four common principals which are clean, separate, cook and chill. (Refer to FightBac web site in additional information)

Clean refers to:

- Handwashing which must be practiced by all food handlers and should also be encouraged by the children prior to eating.
- Washing of food such as fruit and vegetables prior to cutting or eating whole.
- Washing of all food handling surfaces and eating surfaces with soap and water followed by sanitizing. Sanitizing can be done by wiping the area with a solution of ½ to 1 teaspoon

household bleach to one litre of water and allowing it to dry or remain at least 30 seconds prior to removing.

Separate refers to:

- Keep raw and cooked, ready to eat foods separate such as store raw meats below cooked foods in the refrigerator and never prepare raw and cooked foods together.
- Clean and sanitize all cutting boards especially after handling raw foods prior to handling cooked or ready to eat foods.
- Wash hands at all times especially after handling raw foods.
- Arrange the flow of the kitchen such that raw meats are handled in a separate area away from ready to eat foods.
- When dealing with issues of allergies:
 - 1) food handlers should be made aware of childrens' allergies
 - 2) ingredients should be known for each menu item
 - 3) recipes should remain consistent by using the same ingredients each time
 - 4) prepare special allergy related items in separate area that can be thoroughly cleaned in order to prevent cross-contamination
 - 5) **have a response plan in place** (contact phone numbers, emergency response, etc.)

Cook refers to:

- Cook food to the required internal temperature. (Refer to Food Safety website: Food Thermometers for Safe Cooking in additional information)
- Where possible use food thermometers to check hot and cold temperatures (Refer to Food Safety website: Food Thermometers for Safe Cooking in additional information)
- Reheat hot foods to a minimum temperature of 74⁰C (165⁰F)

Cooling refers to:

- Keep cold foods at 4⁰C (40⁰F) or lower
- Cool hot foods rapidly in small batches or shallow pans no deeper than 2 inches in the refrigerator or ice water bath. Leave corner(s) uncovered to allow heat to escape.
- Cool hot foods from 60⁰C - 20⁰C (140⁰F - 68⁰F) within 2 hours and then 20⁰C - 4⁰C (68⁰F - 40⁰F) within 4 hours

Food Handler Education

The Province of Nova Scotia now requires that eating establishment owners or someone in their absence have a Food Handlers course. This requirement does not apply to “not for profit” operations such as the breakfast program. We do offer and strongly recommend a 2-3 hour volunteer oriented

food handlers course provided by the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, Food Safety Section. Enquiries and arrangements can be made by contacting the local office. (Refer to additional information for contact numbers)

Overall tips:

- Limiting the presence of raw meats reduces the risk of cooking and separation.
- Using a cook and serve policy reduces risk of holding temperatures and having leftover food, as well as having to rapidly cool food.
- Working in smaller batches reduces the risk of cooling or reheating.
- Wherever possible, breakfast programs should be located in a pre-existing food production area such as a home studies room. When facilities are limited to refrigeration and a microwave, then the menu should reflect such conditions and be restricted to what can be safely produced.
- All off-site food services used by a breakfast center must be permitted as a food service facility by the Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture.
- Perishable food should not be left in the “danger zone” 4⁰C (40⁰F) to 60⁰C (140⁰F) for more than two hours prior to returning to safe hot or cold temperatures.

Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture, Food Safety Section is available for consultation and on-site visits. To contact any inspector click on contacts at the bottom of the web page at: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf/foodsafety/> .

Additional Information Available at:

- Nova Scotia Dept. of Agriculture and Fisheries, Food Safety Section Site
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf/foodsafety/>
- Food Safety Tips
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf/foodsafety/factsht/> (Contact Site)
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf/foodsafety/> (Click on contacts at bottom of page Nova Scotia Food Retail and Food Services Code (overall information))
<http://www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf/foodsafety/NSFoodCode.pdf>
- Fight Bac!
<http://www.canfightbac.org/english/class/classe.shtml>
- Our Healthy School
<http://ourhealthyschool.hrsb.ns.ca/>

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