

SHARE TABLE GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS IN FRANKLIN COUNTY

Foods Allowed

- **Unopened, prepackaged shelf-stable foods** (i.e. granola bars, fruit snacks, juices).
- **Whole fruits** (i.e. bananas, oranges, apples.) and **pre-packaged sliced fruits and vegetables**.
- **Items that need to be kept cold** (i.e. milk, yogurt, string cheese) **should be held at 41°F or lower**. A small refrigerator, cooler, or drained ice bath can be used. If these foods cannot be kept cold, they must be discarded after 3 hours.
- **Packaged items prepared in the cafeteria** (i.e. turkey sandwiches) **must be date marked if held for more than 24 hours, not to exceed 7 days**.

Foods Not Allowed

- **Food from home or outside the cafeteria**
- **Opened or unpackaged foods such as:**
 - Opened bag of baby carrots
 - Salad bowl without lid
 - Partially eaten food

Reservice/Donation

- Foods left on the share table may be returned to the cafeteria's school meal program.
- Food from one USDA Child Nutrition program can be used for another USDA Child Nutrition Program.
- Food on share tables is meant to be eaten by students.
- Unwrapped whole fruit must be rewashed and dried before reserving.
- Donation: Foods can be donated to a nonprofit organization as long as they are kept at the appropriate temperature and packaging is intact.

Food Safety and Best Practices for Share Tables

- Students are encouraged to take items from share tables to be consumed outside the meal service period.
- Signage should clearly outline what is allowed/not allowed and should use more pictures than words.
- Staff should monitor the table and discard any foods that have been opened, punctured, or contaminated.
- Invite students to participate as share table helpers or assistant monitors.
- If possible, locate the share table directly after the point of service so that students interact with the table as a natural part of the cafeteria line.
- Wheeled carts can be helpful for moving food to the kitchen for reserving or packaging for donation.
- "Sell By" and "Best By" dates are related to quality, they are not expiration dates. Ohio food laws do not prohibit serving food that is past the date on the label as long as it is in good condition which can be evaluated by observation, touch, and taste by school staff.

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Example Share Tables



Share table signage and additional resources can be found at [SaveMoreThanFood.org](https://www.savemorethanfood.org)



Note on Regulatory Bodies: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) administers the National School Lunch Program. In the state of Ohio, the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce's Office (ODEW) of Nutrition administers the program locally. The Ohio Department of Health provides stricter guidance on share tables and food donations which supersedes the guidance from the USDA and ODEW. Franklin County Public Health (FCPH) and Columbus Public Health (CPH) are the local health authorities able to define even stricter guidance. This guidance document was developed by SWACO with input from the ODEW, ODH, FCPH, and CPH.

Contact foodwaste@swaco.org regarding questions or for direct contact information for federal, state and local health authorities.